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[THE FOOD OF LOVE.]

## ZILLAH THE GIPSY;

OR,

### LOVE'S CAPTIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Violet's Victims," "Lord Jasper's Secret," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER VII.

"FAIR AS A FLOWER."

He look'd her in the tearful eyes  
That were so deep and wonder-wise,  
Then in the shadow of the keep  
He laid him down and fell asleep.

THE duke woke towards morning with the faint sound of the rustle of leaves outside his tent. He was very weak and exhausted, for the loss of blood had been great and his mind was somewhat distorted, thoughts wandered and seemed to escape the leash of reason.

By degrees he remembered all—the parting from Zaire, the moonlit walk, the silver light on the mountains and the shot that had brought him low.

Who could have fired it? What cruel hand had sought to tear down his young life when it was at its fullest and brightest? He believed that he had not an enemy in the world, for the duke invariably remembered the worldly advice of that great man who warned his readers never

to make enemies if they wished to get on, to use people and to get rid of them politely, but without offence, so that they could always betaken up again in the future if they suggested anything profitable.

"I must find out who that person was who tried to take my life," the duke murmured, "there must be no time lost in trying to hunt him down."

It was simply horrible to think that an enemy walked about free to attempt a second murder.

Had robbery been the motive, had the duke found his watch taken and his pockets rifled, he would have felt relieved, the motive then would have been sufficiently clear.

As he reflected thus the light grew clearer and the shadows stronger upon the vines and grasses.

He felt thirsty and his thirst increased. After another hour dragged itself wearily away, the pains from the bullet wound in his side racked him with mortal agony and a groan fell from his lips.

A few minutes after he was conscious of a form lingering about the entrance to the tent, a young girl with a small head surrounded by rich, clustering hair, with beautiful, luminous eyes that yet had a frightened, startled look in them such as may be seen in a lovely animal's that longs to dart away and yet seeks kindness.

The scarlet handkerchief had fallen from Zillah's hair and hung loosely about her neck. The duke saw her outline and profile now quite clearly in the morning light, whereas, the night before, in his fainting state, he had not wondered if she who had saved him were young or old, ugly or pretty.

He beckoned Zillah towards him.

She came rather shyly at first, her face down-cast and her pretty head turned a little sideways.

A great awe possessed her at this meeting with a Georgio whose sufferings had filled her thoughts all night, she had tied his ring to a cord and wore it in her breast for safety.

"I'm so thirsty," he said, looking into her great, wondering eyes, "could you manage to find me a drink of some kind?"

Zillah had come nearer to him by this time, her face lighting up a little at his words. Could he be one of those old Roman gods she had heard of who visited wood, forest and ocean at times? Never had she seen a face so like one of those marble divinities, a face not in the least like Michel's or Black David's or even resembling the saints that the peasants worshiped at wells and by the roadside, but fair and white and pure, a statue that breathed and moved.

"Would you like some grapes?" she asked, again afraid of the sound of her own voice, as she had been when the prince had addressed her yesterday and made her feel to hate him for his derision at the same time as she despised herself for her ignorance.

"Grapes?" he repeated, smiling, "I should prefer a cup of coffee. Could you knock up a fire and make some?"

"I will try," she answered, the colour darting over her face, and drew the scarlet handkerchief over her hair as she glided quickly away.

"Is she a dream?" cried the duke, amazed at her beauty, "or a woman, a living, breathing woman? I could fancy she is a nymph of old Egypt traversing Ptolemy's court-yard with those heavy brows, dark and sombre as friezes, and that perfect grace born in her as awkward-

ness is born in others. Is she a muse living away from mankind's survey, haunting the woods and groves and comforting mourners' griefs? She's quite the loveliest thing in female form I've ever seen."

Zaire by the side of this girl was like a statue of Falconnet in superb millinery, whereas Zillah was like a goddess created by a Phidias, grand, antique and Greek—a Venus with nothing self-seeking or worldly in her nature, while Zaire seemed the type of a certain class of women, the pretty drawing-room panther in high heels, with velvet claws and many thousands at her banker's.

The duke was passionately grateful to the girl who had rescued him from death. Her simplicity seemed to him quite divine, wearied as he had long been of hypocrisy and artificiality, petty intrigues and faithless liaisons.

Zillah gathered together some wooden faggots and soon kindled a fire. Then she fetched the coffee, poured a cupful into a coffee-pot with a pint of water, and threw herself on the grass as she waited for it to boil. She had often prepared it thus for Thyra and others of the tribe, and after she had waited for it to settle and refined it she poured out some coffee clear as sherry into a cup and took it straightway to the duke's tent—milk they always had in abundance—and soon he was lying back, much refreshed with the delicious beverage.

"It is as good as any I've drunk at Tortoni's," he said, smiling, and returned the cup, amused at Zillah's astonished look.

"What is Tortoni's?" she asked, gravely.

"A very noted French café, in Paris. Would you like to see it one day?"

A vivid blush darted over her face; had he, then, read her restless musings, her longings to escape?

"Come and sit down by my side, and let us talk together," he said, amused at the blush. It was long since his words and glances had drawn such vivid carmine tints into a girl's cheeks.

Zillah obeyed. Was she under a spell? Something defiant and tempestuous swept over her, the aroused soul was breaking through the chains of lethargy. When would it live—and dare to enjoy?

"Now tell me," he said, carelessly, "how is it you are a little wild girl of the woods—why are you a gipsy? Have they stolen you from some palatial home and robbed you of some great inheritance?"

Zillah remembered her oath—she had sworn to keep silence on the past. These gipsies—the only ones left of the old mysterious Romanies, claiming direct descent from the Egyptians—were fierce in their commands and cruel in their punishment as any members of a secret brotherhood.

"I am one of them—a gipsy," said Zillah, and trembled.

He saw she would not or, perhaps, dare not reveal more.

"Do you know that you have saved my life?" the duke went on, after a pause, "but for you, sweet Zillah—you see I heard them call your name last night—I should be lying stiff and stark in a way-side ditch. Now what return can a man make to a girl for his life?"

Almost unconsciously the duke had grasped Zillah's little sun-burnt hand. He fancied it fluttered in his grasp like the breast of a little captured bird.

How soft and white was the hand imprisoning hers, strong too and supple, and it had been stretched on the grass the previous evening powerless and weak when she first discovered the fallen man and touched those cold fingers, now warm with life. It was sweet to think she had saved him, the thought gave her more joy than anything before had ever done, and her usual morbidness and indifference faded at the recollection. Then, with a graceful gesture, Zillah turned her head and kissed the duke's hand as it rested on her shoulder.

"I am glad," she said, in her sweet, innocent gravity.

A thrill passed through him as her innocent lips pressed his hand. Perhaps he had never

before received such a kiss as this one from a woman.

"Zillah, will you trust me?" he asked, impulsively.

"Oh, yes," she said, turning a little pale—joy was so new it made her heart beat almost too fast.

"Tell me what I can do for you to make you happy and content," he said, eagerly. "I am rich, I am a duke—not that you will understand what that means, but I have, at least, the power of giving you happiness, of improving your position. You cannot be content with your lot as it is."

Zillah started to her feet. It seemed as if he read her inmost thoughts. But discontent was a sin against the gipsies, and her oath, so she was silent.

The duke was thinking that it was a pity for such loveliness to perish unseen, to fade away unnoticed and uncared for, as the white blossoms of a woodland flower. And he wished to benefit Zillah—moreover, she interested him, as everyone out of the common ever did.

There was no look of longing for good or gain in those large, dark eyes. Would civilisation spoil her? And contact from childhood with great Nature in all her silent, mighty forms made her a freer, grander creature than the puppets of society could ever be?

"What do you like the best of anything, Zillah, in all the world?" the duke next asked, watching the sunshine light up the threads of gold in her hair.

"To sing."

"Ah! then you have a love of music. You must let me hear your voice," he said, and thought of Zaire.

Zillah drew his ring from off the cord tied round her neck and handed it to him.

"I was afraid it might get stolen," she said, simply, "some of our people are not honest."

"Keep the ring, my dear girl, and say nothing about it to anyone; you may find it useful some day, and it will please me to think that the one who saved my life holds my favourite ring."

But Zillah shook her head.

"I would rather not; what use could it be to me? and now I must run away, they will want me and you have talked enough and are growing pale."

She waved her hand and left the ring on the coverlet.

The duke remembered that Zaire had ever coveted these emeralds and diamonds and here was a girl utterly wild and untaught seeing no lure in the light of gems.

He fell into a soft slumber for an hour or two when he was visited by the doctor and heard that in a few days, if he were perfectly quiet, he might be able to be moved from the tent.

"I want to find out who was my would-be murderer, and the longer I lie here the less chance there is of his being discovered; now if we were in England we could give information to the police at once," the duke said, restlessly.

The thought that he was hated, that some unknown enemy desired his life and thirsted for his blood, he who had injured none, poisoned every memory. It was as if some vile dye had been ruthlessly poured into the crystal waves of his hitherto light-hearted happiness and prosperity.

"Our people generally use the knife," said the doctor, thoughtfully, after dressing the wound and preparing to leave his patient, "when they wish to be revenged; a pistol-shot is the work and design of a coward."

The duke turned the bullet that had been extracted from his side over in his hand. It was evidently of English manufacture.

"Have you wronged any of the women hereabouts?" the doctor asked; "they are ardent creatures but dangerous. Have you any love in Rome who maybe has lovers in legion?"

"I?" cried Bertram. "I never wronged a woman in my life. The only woman I visited that evening I was shot was Zaire, Countess Desrolles."

"You visited Countess Desrolles?"

"Yes, as a friend who honours her and esteems her highly."

"I am afraid your chivalry is wasted in that quarter, my dear duke," the doctor said, slowly, "from all I hear the fair Desrolles, like most prime donne, likes wealthy noblemen tasked to her ruin."

The duke frowned and set his teeth.

"What you say is false, Berti," he said, fiercely, "I know how Zaire has been traduced by enemies jealous of her success and rivals whose slander can work injury to the reputation of a saint."

"Maybe," the doctor said, shrugging his shoulders, "but for Heaven's sake don't excite yourself in this way or hemorrhage will set in. I merely hear these things on passant; we will admit the fair Desrolles is pure as Elizabeth of Hungary."

But his words had struck deeper than he was aware. Bertram grew more restless as he weighed them and turned them over in his mind. It could not be possible that any lover of Zaire seeing him leave her villa had resolved to slay him out of jealousy, and yet it did seem strange that he should be followed and shot at in that ominous way. The vague shadow of doubt began to overcast all his former bright-ness.

"Have I been deceived?" he asked himself, beginning to be sceptical of all faith in womanhood, his eyes resting on the wild flowers that Zillah had brought to the tent after she removed the coffee.

In the meanwhile Zillah had fetched the mandoline and was singing softly to herself beneath the eaves.

She had forgotten Michael, but Michael had seen that visit of hers to the duke's tent, and thought it as well to keep an eye on Zillah now that accused George had been brought wounded to their encampment.

Michael was a true type of gipsy—passionate, remorseless, jealous, and fierce in his love, with no scruples of any kind; he would have given his life freely for Zillah, perishing in her defence if she were true; but at the same time he would take her life as freely were she false, or he would content himself with working out a terrible vengeance.

Like Thyra, he could strike at the heart when the time came and a long-connected plot was ripe.

Zillah, singing with her face upturned to the sky, and the wind sweeping the loose clusters of her hair from her brow, did not perceive Michael at first, she sang with passion and sweetness as her genius and the inspirations of art bade her—her voice was deep and full, and it had never been strained and forced into manufactured execution, it was a voice that one of an angelic host above might have possessed who pitied mortals both the living and the dead.

"Zillah, don't you see me—won't you speak to me?" cried Michael, seizing the mandoline and throwing it from him with savage violence.

"Yes, I see you, Michael, it would be difficult to avoid doing so," Zillah said, with a frank smile, "such a big fellow as you are."

As yet she understood nothing of these new emotions that possessed her, she forgot how Michael had once kissed her and the burning fire in his eyes.

"Is this the way you talk to your future husband?" he said, sullenly, the blood boiling in his veins.

"I promised to try and love you, Michael, and—"

"You gave me your word, Zillah."

She laughed, turning it into a jest—the scowl deepened on his brow.

"I saw you in his tent this morning," he said hoarsely. "Beware, Zillah, do not trifle with me. If you are false, I will track you and kill you as I have killed in Genoa."

Zillah laughed now contemptuously, her haughty head raised, and she spoke on an impulse.

"Threats have never moved me, Michael, that you know. No power on earth can compel me to marry you, and I do not know if I quite like your coarse ways—your brutal words."

Michael flung his arms above his head with an oath.

"The Georgio's work," he muttered, "the poison on his tongue, the golden guineas in his purse, the diamonds on his hands—take care, Zillah, take care, evil may befall you both."

The duke from where he was lying could hear fragments of that hoarse murmur.

"The wild beasts at play, I suppose," he said, with a smile, but his face was stern and grave.

There was a pause, and then Zillah said, more gently:

"Fetch me my mandoline, Michael, do not begrudge me those sweets of liberty, or I shall regret the gilded walls at last."

Her eyes were now on a level with his, and were full as threatening and defiant; they were alike in shape and colour, but Michael's had the deeper, stronger tint of certain Southern wines.

For answer he rose and approaching "the instrument kicked it savagely aside, and then lifting his powerful fist smashed it at one blow.

Zillah's fury equalled his. She stretched out her hands and threw back her royal head—the scarlet drapery falling from her hair.

"You have spoilt my one joy in the desert," she said, using the strange, fantastic words of her race, "and thus would you destroy my future life—but no, Michael, never, never. Here I swear, kneeling by this poor, beloved, broken toy, that I will never own you as friend or call you husband—I am alone henceforth and forever."

A bitter wail fell from Michael's lips as Zillah glided away.

Her mandoline was broken—could the old chains be snapped asunder with it?

"It is the work of the accursed Georgio," repeated Michael, picking up the fragments.

And the duke this time heard him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THAT VOICE OF SWEETEST MUSIC.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the moon a fire  
Is poured upon the hill, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire.

AFTER a few more days had passed away, not wearily either, for life in the gipsies' tent was vivid and picturesque, the duke found himself sufficiently recovered from his wound to return to Rome. He set every possible inquiry on foot regarding that unknown enemy, and he spared neither time nor trouble in his search; but all was in vain—no clue to him could be discovered.

After his quarrel with Zillah, Michael went away by himself far beyond the mountains to the sea, as soon as he believed the duke had discontinued his visits to the tents. Zillah appeared turned to stone, and he could trace nothing between her and the duke to give him as yet any pretext for jealousy or wrath.

"The way to win women is to leave them," thought Michael, as he departed in search of Thyra, "Zillah will never care for me so long as I'm always at her feet, mayhap she'll miss me after I've been absent a few months."

So he went and Zillah was glad.

A great change had come over the girl. The long-imprisoned soul was awakening and she felt in turn tantalised and distressed by the duke's treatment.

He had read aloud to her verses of her favourite poets in the firelight as the gipsies sat around their fires, watching with keen pleasure the changes in her beautiful face as he read and the words touched her fancy, and sometimes a great dread would possess Zillah that he had supernatural power and could compel others to obey his will. In any case he was influencing her mind, for till she saw him and heard him speak Zillah was hardly aware she had any mind at all that desired to be fed and nourished, her poets had made her dreamy and sad—that was all.

The duke had now been absent four days, and she had caught no single glimpse of him,

so at last she began to think he had forgotten her. It was very lonely in the great solitude of the woods, and the background of the mountain looked weird in the rich sunset, even the voices of the nightingales singing pained her—she felt compressed in too narrow a groove.

Zillah went and stood this sultry summer evening near the fountain by the white saint on the wall that the peasants worshiped. She heard rough voices raised that jarred on her ears, and she hated their tones.

The duke had, indeed, completed the work of discontent that the prince had begun.

Zillah, also, craved a glimpse of that other life which she had rejected in her childish ignorance, and of which society and civilization held the keys.

"Ah! you are here," said a voice that seemed to burst on her senses like a sudden glory, and turning round she found the duke by her side. A warm flush lighted up her face as she saw him leaning over the fountain, his graceful head uncovered and the wind lifting one heavy lock from his brow.

"I fancied you had forgotten," she said, simply, in her serious innocence.

"Then you have thought of me, and I've been racking my brains to know how I can benefit you or make you happier. I suppose you are happy though?"

"Never," said Zillah, truthful in her passionate impulse, "I wonder why others look so glad when I only feel a kind of odd despair."

She had said something similar to him once before. He looked grave, but the smile he turned on her was a caress.

"We must find the fairy's wand that will change you; perhaps you have lately missed your beloved instrument, and you know you never would sing to me without one, so I have brought you this from Florence, where I have lately travelled."

Zillah uttered a cry of joy as a very beautiful mandoline was transferred from a case hidden behind the fountain to her hands, and her face grew pale.

"Well," he said, archly, "are we pleased—are we going to sing?"

He still watched her with an amused smile of pleasure. Never had he seen a girl's face light up with such sudden ardour.

"How good you are to bring me this," she panted, abruptly, something rising in her throat checked utterance.

"Is it sufficient payment do you think for the debt I owe you, Zillah—my life, which you restored to me? But if you are really pleased sing me something as we rest together here in the shade, with all the sweet fallen blossoms about us and the distant waters of yon cascade for an audience."

Zillah touched the strings of the mandoline as if it were a sacred instrument, her lips parted and she now grew crimson from excitement.

The duke had assisted many untaught artists, provided them with means of study and elevated irrepressible street hawkers and noble Greeks to giddy heights of fame, but never had he seen such fervour and adoration kindled before in any human face.

Zillah sang, and in singing she seemed quite detached from anything earthly; that deep-souled, passion-thrilled voice rang through the air as that of some inspired Maenad, her eyes dewy with rapture in which tears blended.

"Zillah, you have genius," the duke said, amazed at her power, "it is the voice of the desert, of freedom, of poetry. What city could ever produce such a deep-throated songstress? You must come with me—we will teach you art."

Zillah was returning to earth at last. She saw the fountain, the fallen blossoms, the white head of the saint.

"Did you like it then?"

"Like it? It would be positive sin to allow you to linger any longer with barbarians," he touched the dark clustering masses of her hair that hung about her temples—hair innocent of fringe and curling irons, and which was wild as a young lioness's mane. "Why should you not break with these gipsies altogether?"

"Because of my oath, and they trust me," she said, simply.

Trust!

He knew how little that word was ever studied or prized in his world; this girl, this Pagan, was true to the spoken word, wild and untaught, she could not betray.

"You need not leave them then," he said, soothingly, "not at least for the present. We will wait and see what fate has in store for you in the future—but you must study, you must work. I must take you to Mathias."

"Who is he?"

"One of the very few honest musicians who do not trade on the weaknesses and vanities of the poor who seek their aid or counsel. Mathias is a good man, an excellent teacher—but he is honest, and, therefore, is he poor."

Zillah looked deeply interested, her eyes sparkled, she no more doubted him than Marguerite doubted Faust, and she had cause for her confidence—Bertram never injured the helpless or slew the weak.

"When shall I come?" she asked, pressing her hands to her brow, which ached with the intensity of her mood.

"Now—at once, with me."

"As I am, in my scarlet hood and this bodice?" said Zillah, glancing down her dress.

"It will be all the same to Mathias. I have before introduced young women to him in as peculiar a costume as yours; he does not value very far, and I am anxious you should lose no time."

Zillah caught up her mandoline and followed the duke through the wood with the faith of a dog in its owner. Only women, poets and dogs can love with the love that often ends in death. But as yet Zillah's heart was unscathed by the merciless fire—she was only full of wonder and interest, like a large-eyed child.

The duke was silent as they proceeded on their journey, but he noticed the way his young gipsy walked—the free, fearless grace that duchesses might have envied—the walk which, like the voice, was the product of contact with nature.

As they entered Rome the duke came suddenly upon Prince Anatole smoking a cigarette and sauntering lazily along as if he were in St. James's at the height of the season.

He started at this rencontre with the duke followed by Zillah, in fact his face grew pale and troubled, but he masked his expression effectually by pointing derisively to the girl, who had wandered away a few paces.

"Another caprice, my dear duke?" he said, drearily; "beware, gipsies are dangerous; they know how to hate, and they are as superstitious as any of your English realists."

"I wish to befriend her," the duke answered, gently, quite content for his motive to be misjudged by the rogue, "she has genius."

"Bah!" cried the prince—"genius, and so have Elsie Franks and Zaire Desroilles and little Benjamin. The knack you mean of stuffing themselves with bark-notes and crying 'Give, give,' like the daughters of the horse-leach. Benjamin had five fortunes left her, and she was brought up at a pig-killing factory, somewhere in America. They are simply clever and astute, and nature has given them an abnormal development of throat—voilà tout."

"If they are comorants why need she be one?" the duke said, pointing to Zillah, where she stood in the mellow light of evening; "she has rare beauty, and the soul—"

"That I admit," said the prince, putting up his glass—"wonderfully handsome, indeed, but I don't care for trying experiments, your unfledged artists are often disappointing; still, my dear duke, if the sport pays you and you find amusement in it you must, like all spoiled children of fortune, of course please yourself. By-the-by, remember to call one day at my palace, my sister and daughter will be delighted. Adieu."

A shade fell on the duke's brow as he moved onwards. Prince Anatole and such men as he were disenchanters always, they liked to tear the bloom off the rose, the down off the butterfly's wings; disgusted and sated with all things themselves, they sought to rob others of all

illusions, and in illusion alone is happiness found on earth.

The duke fancied for the first time he was, perhaps, doing a foolish thing in taking Zillah to Mathias.

Zillah never thought of speaking save when he addressed her. The silence between them to her seemed eloquent. She had that tint in her face that Murillo gave his women. Soon would Zillah find how imperious were the needs of the mind when once art has aroused it. She felt becalmed and entranced.

The house of Mathias was a little quaint dwelling. They could hear the strains of music flowing through the opened windows as they waited for admission.

The duke knew his way well about those winding chambers. He came upon the old musician pouring over an ancient, almost illegible manuscript, lately discovered, of a composer who had been starved to death in a garret, but whose works were now enriching his family and the publishers that had once repudiated him.

"I have brought you a new pupil, Mathias," said the duke, shaking him warmly by the hand.

Zillah now saw an old, wrinkled face, eyes deep set beneath heavy brows—a face more like a mummy's than a man's, so shrivelled and tawny was the skin.

"Another Benjamin?" said Mathias, tossing back his old velvet cap and scrutinising Zillah.

"No, a gipsy, too proud and loyal to gain worldly success I am afraid."

Mathias was brewing some herbs in a stew-pan on the fire and gave them a shake ere speaking again.

"Can she sing?"

"You must hear her, Mathias."

"Well, let her begin."

"Take your mandoline and sing to us, Zillah," said the duke.

Zillah had no vanity of any kind, and she obeyed.

But she scarcely sang with the fire and passion with which she was accustomed to sing in the woods.

Walls were around her. They seemed to check the rise of song.

Mathias listened attentively, and smiled as she laid down the mandoline.

"She will do," he said, again shaking his herbs.

The duke drew him aside, and had some conversation with him, of which Zillah was unconscious.

A deeper light shone in her eyes, which rested on her protector. Her slender, girlish frame quivered with emotion.

"Do you think she has a finer voice than Zaire Desrolles?" the duke asked, preparing to leave.

"She will have, or I shall be much mistaken. Our Desrolles has always been a hot-house plant from her infancy, and she manufactures too much. She is a dressed-up doll. Where is her feeling, her abandon? Millinery, lovers, riot, dissipation, and no great passion to consecrate art. Such a woman would coquette over a wash tub, and take care her petticoats were more stiffly starched than her rivals."

"Mathias—is this true what you say about her lovers?" the duke asked, his voice trembling somewhat.

"True that she has a wealthy prince to add to her fifty dresses—yes. She is well furnished with all the spoils of the prima donna—unlike Rachel Felix, poor girl, whose wardrobe was shabby, and whose soul wore out her body."

The duke knew that Mathias was to be relied on. He was no detractor, he invariably spoke the truth, and then he was always behind the scenes, so to speak.

"She is not worthy of you, Bertram," Mathias said, with feeling, and glanced at Zillah, whose eyes were fixed on him.

The duke could better account for that pistol-shot now. It might have been aimed by a rival jealous of his late visit to the white villa amid the golden orange trees.

"I can give you proof of her manner of life

when you next call," the musician said, after a pause.

Bertram was silent. He was gazing on the exquisite loveliness of the living picture before him—on Zillah, fearless and freeborn, with none of the narrowness, the meanness, the petty vulgarities of the other world.

It was the voice of Arabia that rang in his ears, the wail of captivity was in it, for Selika had suffered much at the prince's hands, and in transmitting her magic gift to her young daughter her own pain was also transmitted with it. Zillah would suffer always from the influences that had tortured Selika.

Before leaving, Zillah agreed to visit Mathias daily, and put herself entirely under his tuition.

She knew that Thyra would give her perfect freedom of action were she to throw gold in her path, and none could injure her among the gipsies save Thyra or Michael.

She had always kept distinct from the rest of the tribe.

It was late when the duke and Zillah found themselves again in the wood. There was no moon, and the hush in the air suggested a coming storm.

Bertram was poet enough to appreciate the luxury of this seclusion and peace, the utter solitude surrounding them.

There was a peculiar charm also in Zillah, in her beauty and manner, her pride and reticence.

Solitary and voluptuous, she was a superb contrast to that false woman he had once fancied he loved—Zaire, in her high-heeled shoes and French chapeaux, her dainty laces and sparkling gems, who would never have cared to thus linger by a fountain, soothed by the sound of falling blossoms.

"Sing again that ode to liberty, Zillah," the duke said, stretching out his hand and resting it on her shoulder. "What a Joan of Arc you would have made, child. How you would have loved France and sought to save her and seen fantastic visions. I always long to quote Homeric verse when you sing."

She generally behaved to him more like some ardent, chivalrous youth, longing to serve an adored master, than a girl dependent on the caprice of a man's will.

But to-night her voice was tremulous and her cheeks pale.

Zillah was bewildered at herself; a great ache oppressed her.

She stood up before him and touched the strings of her mandoline, but no words or sounds came.

"I shall be late back," she said, dreamily, "and they will wonder where I have been so long. If they should find me with you, it would be dangerous for us both."

She was less wild, but more shy, and she had not turned to kiss the hand that yet lingered on her shoulder.

There were tears in her eyes, but through the night's darkness he did not see them glisten on her long, curling lashes.

"Do you wish to please me?" he murmured.

"Yes, I have nothing else to live for."

"Then go to Mathias daily. I shall look in on you both sometimes."

What was the meaning of this growing desperate pain in her heart in which was an undercurrent of vague joy?

"Good bye," said Zillah, preparing to return to the tents.

She shivered, and did not hold out her hand.

The duke drew her towards him and kissed her once lightly on the brow. She was so different to all other girls, so strange and troubled, and yet so indifferent to herself—where could be the harm?

And then he passed quickly down the path and left her alone in the stillness of the night.

Zillah's large dark eyes were no longer dewy and moist with tears; they were lit with soft rapture, and then she crept quietly back to the tents and did not sleep—but thought and thought with her chin on her hands all through

the long hours amid the odorous fragrance of the ilex woods.

She was returning to the world of the Georgios—a new life seemed given to her with that first kiss from his lips.

(To be Continued.)

## SCIENCE.

**THERMOMETRY.**—To judge by the thermometers at present in every-day use, it would seem that nations prefer not their own, but other people's. It was Germany that invented the Fahrenheit scale, which we have appropriated, the Fatherland itself preferring to employ the thermometer of a Frenchman, Réaumur; while France, again, will have none of Réaumur, but uses the Celsius or Centigrade, whose introduction is due to a Swede.

**GOLD IN SEA WATER.**—Gold, said Professor Egleton the other day at the New York Academy of Science, has hitherto been considered by chemists as one of the most insoluble substances in nature, but in reality it is quite soluble. Sonnenstadt has shown that every ton of sea water contains 0.9 grammes of gold. This quantity is, indeed, extremely minute, but it must be remembered that nature is able to compensate for this minuteness by continuing her operations through thousands and millions of years.

**A LENS WITH VARIABLE FOCUS.**—The property which the human eye possesses of forming distinct images at all visible distances is, as is well known, due to the power of the crystalline lens to alter its focal length. This wondrous action is beautifully illustrated by the lens with variable focus recently invented by Dr. Cusco. This ingenious device consists of two fine glass discs set face to face in a suitable ring frame, and having an intermediate space which can be filled with water which is fed by a flexible tube from a small reservoir that can be raised or lowered at will in order to increase or diminish the pressure of the water. The reservoir may also take the form of a syringe bulb which can be pressed by hand. When there is normal pressure on the water the discs remain flat, and the water pressure is therefore a plane one; but as the pressure increases the disc becomes more and more convex outwards, and a ray of light passing through the lens is therefore more and more converged. In the same way a concave lens may be formed by gradually lowering the water pressure. For making lenses of a certain focal length, Dr. Cusco's variable water lens is likely to be useful.

**A NEW AND EXTRAORDINARY REPTILE.**—Professor Owen's researches into the fossils of South Africa have at last been crowned by the discovery of a singular and extraordinary form, termed by the professor "Platypodosaurus," in which the sternum is shown as a distinctly ossified bone, as in the existing monotremes of Australia. On the derivative hypothesis, it may be conjectured that the higher class of vertebrates, as represented by the low ovoviviparous group now limited to Australasia, may have branched off from the family of Triassic Reptilia represented, and at present known only by the fragmentary evidences of such extinct kinds as that which forms the subject of the present communication. But this is far from being the only instance of correspondence between organisms, both animal and vegetable, of the Cape of Good Hope and those of New Guinea, Australia, and Tasmania. The triassic deposits of the Cape produced a form, Endothiodon, which offered some analogy to the European triassic form, Placodus, and in its turn this Placodus shows a resemblance in the mandible to the Ornithorhynchus of Australia. Professor Owen may be congratulated on one of the most striking discoveries of geology. But what is to become of the old definitions of the class mammalia is a question that now comes to the front.



[IN SOCIETY AGAIN.]

## THE FORTUNES OF ELFRIDA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Within a Maze," "Won Without Weeping,"*  
and other Interesting Stories.

### CHAPTER XXI.

BACK TO THE OLD WORLD.

And when calumny's poisoned breath  
Hath tainted life with hues of death,  
There is a love whose light remains  
To warm the heart when friendship wanes.

"Give me a moment," said Elfrida, "then I will go in to him. There must be no witness of our meeting."

Jacob Brierly assented with a movement of his hand, and went to the door to stop the others who were coming in. Elfrida pressed her two hands hard over her heart for a moment to still its throbbings and entered the room.

Seated by the table, with the light of the lamp shining full upon his face, was a handsome man with iron-grey curls upon his brow and a long beard flowing over his breast. His face was strongly marked by time and exposure, but very handsome still, and when he rose to his feet there was the unforgotten grace and ease of the thorough gentleman.

Their eyes met and the lips of both opened to speak, but not a sound came forth. Slowly, as if in doubt of his reception, Carlisle Harvard extended his arms and Elfrida with a swimming brain allowed them to enfold her.

"My darling child—so like the mother I worshipped."

He had found his tongue, and his voice was rich and full, to Elfrida the most musical voice

—save one, perhaps—she had ever heard. It had the true ring she had learnt to love, and her strong young heart beat proudly as she lifted up her face to his.

"Oh! why have you been so long away?" she asked.

"My darling," he said, "you have yet to learn the history of your father. I was poor and degraded. I return rich and full of honours. Honours of a distant land, but honours I am as proud of as any my country could give. They have only just been bestowed upon me by the Government of Mexico. You know the country?"

"Only by name," said Elfrida, with a smile.

"There, in the heart of a wild country, have I lived for seventeen years—now rich, now poor—and finally with wealth I have not yet counted, at my command. I and a few others found a hoard of jewels, hidden by nature many thousand years ago, and kept our secret well, until we had each acquired a wealth before which the fortune of many a duke would appear insignificant. They have spent most of theirs in making amends for the abstinence of years—in mad indulgence of every luxury. I have by degrees transported mine to the safe keeping of bankers here."

"But why not write—why keep silent so long?"

"I dare not anticipate the joy of to-night. Out where I gathered my fortune a man walks about on the brink of death. The fairest spot on earth is marred by lawlessness, but the people are growing wiser and better, and Mexico will be a mighty kingdom again. If I had had no tie here," his voice softened to an indescribable tenderness, "I would have made that country my home."

"Then you are not disappointed with me?" said Elfrida.

There was no strangeness between them. What little there might have been at first admiration for each other had entirely broken down. He smoothed her beautiful hair with his

strong, sunburnt hands, and kissed her upon the cheek and forehead.

"My child," he said, "you are more beautiful than I thought you would be in my most hopeful dreams."

They sat down now, side by side, their hands clasped together. The longer Elfrida looked into the deep-set eyes and thoughtful face of her father the more she saw in him the man of all others on earth she would have chosen—if having a father had been a matter of choice.

"You have yet one thing more to tell," she said, after a short silence.

"What is that?"

"Your name."

He laughed merrily, and told her who he was, and then, when her amazement had passed away, came her story, not quite so pithily and briefly told as his, but soon revealed.

"So what I strove against came to pass after all," he said. "I feared my mother would spoil you, or I would have left you to her care. I see I mistook even her power."

"You do not know me yet," said Elfrida, shaking her head. "I have not told you all. Let me convince you I am not so perfect as you believe me to be."

Without reserve she told him the story of her early aspirations, her rise and fall; the presentiment she had of again rising in society, and the hopes she had entertained. He smiled at the early parts of her narrative, but when she came to the story of her fall his brow grew ominously black. Seventeen years in a wild country with only adventurers for his friends had not quite stifled his family pride.

"Elfrida," he said, when all was told, "you shall have your revenge. We will play a huge practical joke on society. As Miss Harvard you shall bring them to your feet again. It will be a glorious puzzle to them all. I suppose we can rely upon young Caveall?"

"Implicitly."

"And there are no others, I suppose?"

"Only Malcolm Gordon—and he does not seek society."

"Who is Malcolm Gordon?"

His keen eyes were upon her, and for her life she could not have answered him without faltering. As she explained in slightly broken sentences who he was her father read the secret she thought she kept so close, and made a resolve to seek the acquaintance of Malcolm Gordon; but he made no reference to him otherwise than saying that he would call upon him and ask him to be reserved about Elfrida if he should come in contact with any of the people with whom, as Miss Harvard, she would ere long be associated with.

"Of me," said Carlisle Harvard, "the world knows little or nothing at present. I met the Duke of Brabazon this morning, and as we were friends when we were young (he was Marquis of Ravensbourne then), I made myself known to him. He was glad to see me, for he is a thorough good fellow, and I told him as much of my story as related to my going abroad and the wealth I have acquired."

"You said nothing of me?"

"Only this—I told him I had a daughter, and he said the duchess would be glad to make your acquaintance. He gave me, in fact, an open invitation to go to Castle Tournay, his place in Somersetshire, any time between now and February."

Elfrida's eyes glinted. The dream had become a reality—in one hour she was going into the very upper of the upper circles from which she could look down upon such women as Mrs. Wraxall and Mrs. Cuslepton Carell.

There, at least, she would buy them the march of their shafts even if they were about them at her.

"When shall we go?" she asked.

"In a week if you like," he replied. "I will write to the duchess at once. I shall tell her nothing about you except that you are my daughter; and now, my darling, I must leave you for the night. You look tired and have need of rest."

"You will come again to-morrow?"

"Of course, pet."

"Early—very early. I shall not believe in the reality of to-night until I see you again."

He smiled and held her in his close embrace.

"And I," he said, "will come hither again in fear of my finding my darling flown. So like—so very like my own sweet one who gave you birth."

They went out together and found the house silent and dark. All had gone to rest so that there should be no break in the sweet communion of father and daughter, and no commonplace friendship to come between it and rest.

It was a delicate, considerate thought originating in Miss Steelson.

Another tender embrace, another fond kiss, and Carlisle Harvard, with the dream of eighteen years fulfilled, was threading his way through the dingy streets in search of a cab to take him to his hotel.

He walked again with elastic step—the summit of his life had come again, the air was filled with music, and all his world was Paradise.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### A WOMAN PUZZLED.

Don't thou not remember me?  
Remember! No—I never knew you!

WHEN Mrs. Wraxall had fairly settled down to the change the little scandal about Elfrida brought upon her, she began like a skillful general who is beaten off his ground to try to get a good foothold in another.

Her own set having begun to look askance at her, and each member of it being glad of the opportunity of revenge for what they had suffered under her imperious rule, she cast about to gain a footing elsewhere.

As a leader her occupation was gone—but she was a careful woman, with no mean abilities and

about the most skilful hand at arranging an entertainment that could be found, and it was still open to her to play third or fourth fiddle in a circle above that wherein she had long reigned supreme.

Accordingly she fished about with a hook well baited with adulation, and wormed herself into the good graces of old Lady Nurdlestone—great-aunt to the Duchess of Brabazon—a worldly old woman who could play at whist as well as any professional sharper, and made a book on every big race with a skill that won admiration from even them who lost by her.

So when the duchess asked Lady Nurdlestone who would be a good service in getting up charades and tableaux vivants Mrs. Wraxall was recommended, and, coming in while her grace was there, was honoured with an introduction and an invitation to Castle Tournay.

"Unless you have made a more congenial arrangement for the autumn," the duchess sweetly said, and Mrs. Wraxall hastened to declare that she had no engagement that would not without hesitation give way to the invitation she had just received.

Mrs. Wraxall went home in a state of felicity it would be useless to attempt to describe, and threw the duchess, in a metaphorical sense of course, at the heads of all her acquaintances, who had the agony she gave them, and wondered how the duchess it was "old Wraxall" was taken up by such people as the Brabazons, who were generally so particular.

But they wondered and muttered in vain. There was a little gulf between them and the duke, which shut off their murmurings, and Mrs. Wraxall, elated with the success which had crowned her efforts, lost no time in hastening to the castle, where she humbled and abased herself before the duchess, and was filled with gratitude for having "rooms so quiet," quite out of the way of most of the best apartments, and "really handy for the servants, you know"—the domestics being just above her.

There was already a nice little assemblage of people of high degree, and Mrs. Wraxall being installed as stage manageress, was empowered to ascertain who would like to take part in the plays, and to test their qualifications, so that she might give them suitable parts to play.

This threw her in everybody's way, and gave her a temporary power that was supremely delightful to her, and she favoured the big swells with some of the airs she used to bestow upon her own set, which amused them mightily.

One day when a rehearsal of a charade was going on in the drawing-room the duchess came in to see how they were progressing. She found a young lord wooing Mrs. Wraxall with languid ardour in an imaginary wood.

"We have no Phyllis at present," said that lady, apologetically, "and I am reading the part. Lady Stanton is coming to-morrow."

"Lady Stanton has written to say she will not take a part," the duchess said, "but Mr. Harvard will be here with his daughter this afternoon. The duke has seen Miss Harvard, and is in raptures over her beauty."

"Which Harvard is that?" asked Mrs. Wraxall. "Your grace will remember there are two families of that name, and—"

"This is Carlisle Harvard. He has been abroad many years, and has amassed an immense fortune."

"Had an appointment in India, perhaps," said Mrs. Wraxall, with soft and insinuating sweetness.

"I don't know exactly where he has been," said the duchess, who never could remember anything except the pedigree of a family. "The duke and he are very old friends, and I have promised to bring Miss Harvard out next season."

"I am sure she will do admirably," said Mrs. Wraxall, gushingly, "if she can only be induced to take a part."

"You can but try her," the duchess replied.

In the afternoon Mrs. Wraxall came down from a gentle, refreshing half-hour's sleep after luncheon, and in a sweet frame of mind sauntered into the drawing-room. To her surprise it was

almost empty. In all its magnificent length and breadth she could only find one figure—that of a young woman looking over a sketch-book by a table near the western window.

Mrs. Wraxall saw she was young, with rich masses of golden hair, which seemed in its arrangement to be familiar to her. The figure, too, she was sure she knew, but she was not prepared for the face that was uplifted as she drew near.

It was Elfrida, who had seen her enter the room, and was prepared for the meeting. The face of the Sphinx would have been as readable as hers. To all appearance Mrs. Wraxall was an utter stranger to her.

What to do the latter scarcely knew. She was suddenly taken aback by the unexpected sight that she could adopt no settled plan of action, but stood wavering between recognising and ignoring, and looking thoughtfully and foolishly upward. Elfrida, having looked at her as one might do at a stranger, and not being spoken to, calmly returned to the sketches.

"You carry things with a high hand," said Mrs. Wraxall, gratefully, as she found her tongue. She, of course, intended to cut Elfrida if ever they met, but she was not going to be cut by her. "I should like to know how you came here."

Again Elfrida raised her eyes—this time with a look of surprise in them. There was also a little sympathy expressed in her face, which would have conveyed to a stranger an idea that Mrs. Wraxall was a little out of her mind and Elfrida was very sorry for her.

"Who are you?" she asked, quietly, "and why do you speak to me?"

"Speak to you, Miss Brierly—"

"My name is Harvard, if you please."

Mrs. Wraxall was now utterly bewildered, and put her hand to her brow with a very stage-like effect. Elfrida's power of concealing emotion was now taxed to the utmost—a little more and she must have laughed outright. She was relieved by the entrance of the duchess, who was good-natured, and always in the best of spirits, which may probably account for her having the bloom of thirty-five on a face that had seen its fiftieth year.

"Ah! I see, you have captured your Phyllis," she said to the amazed Mrs. Wraxall. "What do you think of her? Of course she will do."

"Oh! of course," said Mrs. Wraxall, in a hollow tone of voice.

The duchess looked at her with kindly surprise.

"You are not well," she said. "We have taxed you too much—or is this acting?"

"Oh, I am well enough, thank you," replied Mrs. Wraxall, "but I am a little upset. This young lady—"

"Miss Harvard—"

"As she calls herself. Her name is Brierly. She was my protégée unfortunately—and—and—but I must tell your grace the rest by-and-bye."

Elfrida was looking at her with pained amazement, and the duchess was inclined to think that Mrs. Wraxall had disordered her mind by a too severe application to the duties of charade managing. She thought it best to humour her.

"Yes—yes," she said. "I will hear the rest by-and-bye. But go and lie down for a little while—do!"

"Your grace thinks I am insane," returned Mrs. Wraxall, in a white heat, "but I am not. What I say is true. I don't know how Miss Brierly became Miss Harvard, or how she came here. But she is an impostor."

The duchess made a sign to Elfrida, who rose and left the room with a very sad face that nearly drove Mrs. Wraxall to a frenzy, and she was within an ace of spoiling some magnificent dentist work by remorselessly grinding her teeth together. The duchess became really alarmed and rang the bell. Before a servant appeared Mrs. Wraxall had suddenly become calmer, she composed her face and tried to smile.

"I fear I have terrified your graces," she said.

"A—little," replied the duchess, "but you are better now?"

"Oh, yes, much better, but it was not bad acting, was it? We arranged that scene between us to startle you."

"And you succeeded to admiration," said the good-natured duchess. "If you only play as well to-morrow we have a great pleasure to look forward to."

She was relieved, and Mrs. Wrexall, who with ready wit had drawn herself out of deep and dangerous waters into which she was drifting, went to her room to think over what she could do under the circumstances.

She was certain it was Elfrida, but how was she to prove it except by establishing a court of inquiry and bringing witnesses from afar? That she knew would never do, and her first accusation having indubitably failed, she wisely resolved to take counsel with herself before venturing upon another.

It must be remembered that she learnt to look upon Elfrida as an adventuress, and the idea was now fully confirmed.

"But she must be very clever," was her muttered comment as she hastened down the corridor, "and I must be very careful or she will bring further trouble upon me. I have a deep debt to settle with that wretch, Mrs. Caveall."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE MARQUIS OF RAVENBOURNE.

You know not when  
A woman gives away her heart. At times  
She knows it not herself. Instantly  
It goes from her.

"THERE is something wrong with Mrs. Wrexall," said the duchess to the duke when they met—as they usually did in the former's boudoir for a few minutes before dinner. It was the only time in the day they got really to themselves, and it was then they usually made arrangements for the disposal and entertainment of their guests.

"Mrs. Wrexall, Mrs. Wrexall," said the duke, lazily, "who's she?"

"The woman Lady Nurdstone thought would help us splendidly with the charades and tableaux."

"Oh, yes, I remember now—what's the matter with her?"

"Insane, I think."

The duke was a man of repose and not given to staring, but now he opened his eyes very wide and expressed astonishment as clearly as an ordinary man would have done.

"Yes, insane," pursued the duchess; "she called Miss Harvard an impostor or something of the sort, and said her name was Bribery."

"Most extraordinary," said the duke, relapsing into his usual quiet way, "perhaps after all it is only a little eau de cologne or lavender drops or something women occasionally indulge in."

"No, she doesn't drink, and she was very earnest, although she afterwards tried to pass it over as a jest, which I charge to the cunning of madness. I wish she would go away."

"How long is she here for?"

"Unfortunately I asked her to stay an indefinite time, and she is just the sort of woman to stick to a place like this till the last moment."

"Perhaps she will marry somebody," said the duke, carelessly, "she is not a bad-looking woman, is she? and if she has money—"

"She has money and a husband too, but I don't know the man and therefore did not ask him—she doesn't seem to miss him much. It would relieve me very much if he were to be taken ill and send for her."

"Well, well," said the duke, "we must hope for the best. Ravensbourne is coming down to-night, and if I know him—as I ought to do my own son—he will go mad over this daughter of Harvard's."

"Could he marry her?"

"Why not? Harvard is of unimpeachable family as far as blood is concerned. One of

his brothers went wrong, I believe, cheated at cards, and died in an attic in Paris, but that is so long ago that nobody will remember it. Harvard is a thorough good fellow in himself, and immensely rich—he could buy up me," which the duke seemed to think was the acme of creditable power in a man.

"I like the girl," said the duchess, as she rose and gave a few light touches to her dress prior to going down to the drawing-room, "but I must confess I cannot quite read her. What time will Ravensbourne be here?"

"About eight, not in time for dinner, but he will join the men at dessert and come into the drawing-room, where I think he is wanted."

"Yes, our men at present—Harvard excepted—are rather dull, but we shall have a brighter lot by-and-bye."

While the duke and duchess were talking Elfrida was reading a letter which had just arrived.

There was no afternoon or evening delivery at Castle Tournay, but the guests always got their letters of the late post—a groom being sent for them to the postal town seven miles off.

Elfrida's letter was from Malcolm Gordon, and an extract will serve to give an idea of the whole.

"I HAVE done as you bade me and kept your secret. But why have a secret at all? Why indulge in what I cannot but look upon as a freak of, forgive me, a proud temper? I know I have no right to offer you advice or to make comments upon what you do, for now you are as far off from me as the stars, but you know that I, at least, am unselfish in one thing—my love for you. Can I ever forget the scene that laid low my hopes—the time when you bade me think of you no more and so broke up the great dream of my life? I thought you had more than a common regard for me, but I was mad to think it was love. I have paid dearly for my egotism. This is the last time I shall allude to the past, for fear of losing that which I shall cling to while I live—your friendship."

A little further down he wrote in a more business-like strain:

"I HAVE gathered a little news about the old Harvard estates. Part is in the market now and the rest can be bought if a high price be offered. I have communicated with the agent and nothing will be done towards their disposal until I hear from you or Mr. Harvard."

"Men are very blind," thought Elfrida, with a smile that was not without sadness. "They never will understand women—perhaps we don't know ourselves."

She wrote back to him at once. The Harvard estate was to be bought "at any price," as her father particularly desired to regain the home of his forefathers.

"AND in a year or so," she wrote, "we intend to come down to live there, because it is near dear old Easterley."

It was not much to cheer a man so desponding as he had become, but he would have been an idiot if he had been able to see the few words were meant as an encouragement to him.

He took them in that light when he read them, but Malcolm Gordon had his pride too and would not be elated.

"She may be trifling with me after all," he said, "as I fancy she has been trifling with that young idiot Caveall. I'll never ask her again to be my wife. Besides, Harvard with his vast wealth and pride of birth, would be dead against the match. What a weary world it is."

To return to that night at the Castle. Elfrida closed and sealed her letter and gave it to a servant to put into the letter bag, then sailed down to the drawing-room, where her presence was hailed by a host of gentlemen with delight. Her father, ignorant of the scene that had taken place in the afternoon, was conversing amiably with Mrs. Wrexall—who was doing her best to quietly pump him, in which, it need scarcely be said, she dismally failed.

The duke, a baronet, and some half-dozen honourables paid court to Elfrida until dinner was announced, and then the baronet, young, amiable, very gentlemanly, but without brains, secured her and led her into the dining-room with imperfectly concealed triumph.

Sir Rowland Hartley was possessed of the idea of his being a very amusing fellow, almost if not quite a wit.

He said things which he considered to be smart, and the current of his humour flowed through Scandal Country.

He prided himself upon being able to impart the tidings of doubtful doings in upper life to the youngest girl without outraging the laws of decency.

Among women generally he was a favourite, but men were cautious of making his acquaintance.

He had such a knack of worming out their little secrets and serving them round garnished with his own additions and made pleasant to the taste of all listeners, old and young.

"I suppose you don't know much of English society as yet?" was the first remark he made to Elfrida when they had settled into their places.

"You may imagine I have not seen very much of it," Elfrida rather equivocally replied.

"How delightful it must be to come fresh into the circle of mystery," he rejoined.

"Why circle of mystery?" she asked.

"Because although we are so few in number and meet so often we really know very little of each other. Every man and woman here has what they think is a secret, and I daresay some are kept pretty close. But things peep out you know."

"Do you imagine I have a secret?" asked Elfrida, languidly.

"Not much of a one at present," he answered, gaily, "but it is in the nature of things for you to have one by-and-bye. If you have take my advice and don't confide in anyone. The only secret I ever cared to keep I confided to my brother, who went straight to his club and blurted it out."

"Your experience has been unfortunate."

"A little so—but I have had my revenge," he said, with a smile that was almost a grin. "Debenly—you know Lord Debenly? But, of course, you don't—how should you? What an ass I am. Debenly had the laugh of me over my little affair, but I had my revenge last season."

"Indeed," said Elfrida, quietly, indicating with a slight movement to the attendant who came up that she would take fish.

"Yes," said Sir Rowland, "he mixed himself up with a set of which we know nothing—good society, I daresay, in its way, but out of our road—and fell in love with a girl he thought was a great heiress, but she turned out to be the daughter of a labourer who had been on the stage—an adventuress. She had him pretty tight and he had a narrow escape. She had somehow got into the position of a celebrated beauty, but after the exposure she disappeared."

"Did you know her?" inquired Elfrida, as she drank some sherry to bring back the life-blood to her heart.

It chilled her to hear herself spoken of in this flippant, contemptuous manner.

"No," he said, "I was in Italy at the time, but I fancy I know her, or rather have seen her in places I won't mention to you. It was the joke of the season, and Debenly was obliged to go abroad."

"He will come back?"

"Next season, of course, when it will be quite forgotten."

"What became of the girl?"

"She was last seen on board Garnham's yacht."

"And who is Garnham, pray?"

"An immensely rich fellow and a man of birth—but he has done such queer things that society has been obliged to cut him. He is the head of a doubtful racing set."

It was a fortunate thing for him that he knew nothing of the angry torrent he had raised

within her breast. It was in her heart to give him the lie and call him a booby and a coward, but she fought her rage down and went on without showing a ripple.

"You are sure this story is true."

"Certain of it."

"The girl could not have been a lady."

"Impossible."

"But suppose—I put a hypothetical case for the sake of having something to talk about—suppose, I say, it should all be a mistake—or the result of a malicious falsehood, and that this girl should prove to have birth and breeding, would society receive her?"

"Of course not," he said, as he took a cutlet from the silver dish held by the servant. "Once down always down. Society knows no resurrection of the reputation."

"Then scandal can never be refuted?"

"Rarely, if ever. People haven't time to go into old matters, and it is easier to stick to the first verdict."

"What a contemptible body society must be."

The withering contempt expressed in her voice aroused him from his complacency, and he cast a hurried, sidelong glance at her to see how far she included him in the sweeping condemnation. Apparently, he was left out, for the next moment she was talking pleasantly on another topic and ere dinner was over he at least had forgotten all about the "labourer's daughter," who, according to his account, having failed to establish herself as a lady, was pursuing a course of life of which polite society could not speak without considerable reserve.

But in Elfrida's breast there blazed and burned an increasing hate for the class of which he appeared to be one of the spokesmen, and her resolution to bring it again to her feet gathered strength. It would be rare sport, an excellent jest, to regain the height she had lost, and when there to let them know who it was they had bowed before and turn her back upon them for ever.

She would marry Malcolm Gordon and settle down with him near dear old Easterley, which, day by day, grew more into the appearance of a haven of rest for her.

Perhaps it was a foolish idea, but who among us having been slighted have not thought of turning the tables upon those who have slighted us?

The broken-down man, who with empty pockets meets the cold stare of those who were friends with him when rich, lightens his dark hours with dreams of what he will do when he grows rich again. The rejected lover thinks of a possible time when she may repent and find no consolation. And so on through all. It is the way of the world, we have all so much in common.

After dinner Sir Rowland sought out Elfrida in the drawing-room, and showed a tendency to becoming a devoted follower. She did not want him, but he did not exactly bore her, and she allowed him to remain by her. She even encouraged him in the indefinite way a clever woman knows so well how to employ, leaving nothing really for a man to hang upon and yet keeping the flame of hope flickering.

The duke kept good wine, and Sir Rowland had drunk freely. He was not drunk—no gentleman nowadays makes a sot of himself unless he wishes to be sent to Coventry—but he was fairly mellow, and just in condition to be confident and communicative.

Elfrida spoke of the young marquis, and her cavalier immediately went into raptures over the Brabazon heir.

"Ravensbourne," he said, "is the handsomest man of our set, which means that you won't find his equal. He is a tremendous athlete, and has done wonders in sport. At nineteen he was out beyond Utah to shoot buffalo and made a name there among old hands. And yet, you would not think it, with women he is as gentle as a child."

"I see nothing incredible in that," replied Elfrida. "True bravery is always gentle with the weak."

"But you don't call women weak nowadays,

do you?" he said, with a laugh. "By Jove! they have the upper hand of everything. They are coming to the fore tremendously. But I say do you know who that woman is—she's been staring at you all the evening?"

"That—I believe," said Elfrida, after a calm survey of the woman referred to, "is Mrs. Wraxall. The duchess had her down to assist with the dramatic business."

"But she isn't professional, is she?"

"Oh, no. I don't think she stands so high as that."

Somebody was playing the piano at the other end of the room, and was performing brilliantly. But people always talk when there is playing going on, and the music was half drowned by the murmur of many voices. Elfrida thought she would like to go a little nearer, and Rowland espied a vacant chair just behind the player.

With quiet ease she glided towards it, and Sir Rowland followed, in raptures with her grace.

"By Jupiter!" he muttered, "I never saw anything like it," and was so lost in admiring amazement that he narrowly escaped treading on her train.

She sat down, and he stood behind, leaning upon the back of the lounge.

The performer was a lady professional, an enthusiast in her art. Fortunately oblivious of the indifference of the majority around her she had sailed away into the realms of music and was thinking of nothing else. A few who loved to hear sweet harmony stood quietly by, and Elfrida soon became numbered among the rapt listeners. Sir Rowland would have gone on chatting, but she checked him with a soft:

"Oh, hush, please," and he passed the next quarter of an hour in struggling to keep off an insidious attack of sleep.

As the playing drew near its close Elfrida became conscious of the arrival of somebody who she knew was a man, but she did not of course look round. As the last notes resounded through the room he stepped forward, a tall, graceful man of two or three and twenty, and, bending over the singer, murmured a compliment that made her eyes sparkle.

"So like him," whispered Sir Rowland to Elfrida, "he always does the kind thing."

"Who is this courteous knight?" she asked, "I don't think I have noticed him before."

"No," replied Sir Rowland, "he has only just arrived. That is the Marquis of Ravensbourne."

Elfrida looked at him again, and as he turned round their eyes met. For an instant their looks lingered, and then as she withdrew her gaze she felt her heart increase its throbbing and a warm flush suffuse her face.

(To be Continued.)

## INVISIBLE FIRE.

AN English gentleman discovered that the fame of electricity as a curative power had penetrated Persia.

While travelling at Shiraz, on business connected with the overland telegraph, he was visited by a Persian noble. Having received a paralytic stroke in his left shoulder and arm, the nobleman came to inquire if the Englishman's invisible fire (electricity) would not cure him.

He had heard there were magicians in England who cured all diseases by the aid of this fire. The Englishman, having moderated the Persian's expectations by remarking that the statement was an exaggeration, accompanied him to the office of the telegraph.

A powerful battery had just been prepared, and the officer in charge readily consented to operate upon the paralyzed arm. To the two poles of the battery copper wire was attached, and at the extremity of each wire a damped sponge. The Persian was invited to tightly grasp one of the sponges in his paralyzed arm.

Timidly complying, he was astonished to feel no sensation.

"Wait a moment," said the Englishman, clapping the other sponge on the man's shoulder. With a leap and a yell he bounded out of the room, amid the uproarious laughter of the officials.

All Shiraz was excited, the next day, at the shock the nobleman had received. Though it effected a partial cure, the frightened man refused to submit to a second application of the "invisible fire." One shock was sufficient, for he declared all the stars of the heavens were visible to him in that awful moment.

He would visit the telegraph office and look with awe at the "fire" machines. Mournfully shaking his head, he would depart without uttering a word.

Another Persian, whose curiosity conquered his fear, while examining the telegraph, touched one of the terminals of the machine. As he felt no sensation, he laid his hand on the other terminal. A sudden yell and a backward jump were the result.

The man told his companions in an awe-struck tone that he had been bitten by the geni of the machine. The Englishman attempted to explain the operation, but his words did not disturb in the least the Persian's credulity.

## A MONKEY STORY.

THERE lives in the south of France a man of wealth, whose chateau or country place of residence has around it very tall trees. The cook of the chateau has a monkey, a pert fellow, who knows ever so many tricks. The monkey often helps the cook to pluck the feathers from fowls. On the day that interests us the cook gave the monkey two partridges to pluck; and the monkey, seating himself at an open window, went to work. He had picked the feathers from one of the partridges, and placed it on the outer ledge of the window with a satisfied grunt, when, lo! all at once a hawk flew down from one of the tall trees near by, and bore off the plucked bird. Master Monkey was very angry. He shook his fist at the hawk, which took a seat on one of the limbs not far off, and began to eat the partridge with great relish.

The owner of the chateau saw the sport, for he was sitting in a grape arbour, and crept up to watch the end of it. The monkey plucked the other partridge, laid it on the ledge in the same place, and hid behind the window-screen on the inside. The hawk was caught in his trap, for, when it flew down after the partridge, out reached the monkey and caught the thief. In a moment the hawk's neck was wrung, and the monkey soon had the hawk plucked. Taking the two birds to the cook, the monkey handed them to him, as if to say, "Here are your two partridges, master." The cook thought that one of the birds looked queer, but he served them on the table. The owner of the house shook his head when he saw the dish, and, telling the cook of the trick, laughed heartily.

WHITEBAIT.—The value of whitebait as whitebait is very large. One firm alone pays £100 a week in wages during the season, and at another place about £1,000 a year is coming in as wages to the whitebait catchers. Under these circumstances it is not likely that Parliament will ever be asked to make it illegal for the fishermen to catch or the public to eat whitebait. As regards the origin of the term whitebait, in former times these little fishes were used as "bait" for the crab pots; then as now they were very bright and silvery, and were called "white-bait," in contradistinction to other baits that were not white. When they became fashionable as food for Londoners they still retained their name "whitebait," by which appellation they will probably be known at Ministerial dinners for many years to come.

## BRIDGED BY HIS LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl,"**"Poor Lee," "Bound to the Trawl,"**"Fringed with Fire," &c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## FLIGHT.

Oh, for a horse with wings!

ROSALIND and her aunt were to leave Bracknell Towers on Thursday the tenth of December, and this is Tuesday the eighth.

Our heroine rose early this morning. She had quite recovered from the fright which Ned Milstead's violence had caused her, and she was going out to-day with the Bracknell hounds for the last time.

It was a large party that left the Towers this morning, and Lady Bracknell with Lady Mabel Marmon drove to the meet.

"What a lovely girl Rosalind is!" remarked the countess to her companion, with a sigh, as she turned her horses homewards.

"I think if I had such a sweet young creature for a daughter, or even for a niece, I should be almost happy."

Lady Mabel laughed as she said, somewhat spitefully:

"Rosalind is pretty, and she is very sweet so long as she can get her own way, but you have no conception what an obstinate little tergamant she can be when things don't go exactly to her liking."

And then her ladyship recounted some of her troubles with our heroine, in reply to which, however, it must be admitted that she received but little sympathy.

Lady Bracknell had seen too much of the misery consequent upon marriages entered into at the will of relatives not to admire rather than to blame Rosalind's firmness.

Meanwhile our heroine was riding along happily unconscious of the remarks of which she was the subject, and now for the time under the nominal guardianship of a sporting peeress, who was likewise a guest at the Towers.

They had a long, straight run of several miles across country, with the hounds in full cry, then the scent was lost and the first fox carried his brush home safely.

In the meanwhile the badly mounted, the stragglers and the half-hearted had tailed off and gone home, so that the party was considerably diminished in numbers before a second fox was found.

He had no sooner gone away than the old staggers who were accustomed to study Jack Maiden's, the huntsman's, face saw by its expression that he anticipated a splendid run and prepared themselves for the occasion accordingly.

The old huntsman was confirmed in his opinion that this second fox was an old acquaintance when he saw him make off in the direction of a well-known coppice some nine miles distant, where he had been lost more than once before, and he made up his mind not to lose him again.

Rosalind, however, after the first few miles found she had lost sight of the hunt, and having reluctantly given up all hope of being in at the death, she was riding slowly back in the direction of the Towers when Lord Bracknell rode up to her side.

There had been a change in the earl's demeanour towards the girl of late—a change which she had noticed, though she was quite unconscious of its cause.

Since that affair of Ned Milstead's he had kept away from her side, had paid her no more attention than was absolutely necessary as between host and guest, and had thus, to a certain extent, silenced the whispered remarks which his too patient devotion had previously given occasion for.

It may have been that during this time Lord Bracknell was struggling with the passion that consumed him, and that he was striving to get the mastery over it, or, what was more likely still, he was trying to throw Rosalind off her guard, and to avoid any word or look that should excite the suspicions of his jealous wife.

As far as Rosalind was herself concerned his changed conduct was scarcely noticed. She had no suspicion that Lord Bracknell loved her with the mad, unreasoning passion that consumed him.

Such unholy passion was outside her experience, it was something she had read of but had never met with, and she was now as ignorant as she was innocent of having excited it. No doubt her deep pure love for Harry Harcourt blinded her to what was going on in the hearts of those about her. She never thought of love but she thought of her noble-hearted lover, and the consciousness of absolute security in his affection seemed to bridge over all the obstacles that lay between them.

With these feelings in her heart she was quietly and intensely happy, enjoying with the careless delight of a child every kind of exhilarating exercise and amusement, and as ignorant as any infant of the deep elements of tragedy that hovered around her path.

Lord Bracknell made some comment about the hunt as he rode up to her side.

She assented to what he had said, and then they rode on slowly and for a time in silence.

He broke this silence at length by asking:

"Have you heard from your friend Miss Bellford lately?"

"No," she replied, with a slight contraction of the eyebrows, "we have never corresponded. Our acquaintance began and ended in Scarborough."

"Oh, I thought she might have written to you, but as she has not done so I suppose you have not heard that her engagement with Lord Oaklands is broken off?"

"No, surely not broken off? How can that have happened? He could not have done it unless she had given him some cause, and I thought she—"

Then she paused awkwardly.

"You thought she was so much in love with Oaklands that she would take good care not to lose him," sneered his lordship.

"No, not exactly that," replied the girl, with a smile, "but I thought she was so much impressed with his wealth and position that she would use every endeavour to keep him to his engagement if possible. I suppose you have not heard particulars."

"Yes, I have. I had a letter from Oaklands himself this morning. He told me all about it and asked me to undertake the office of peace-maker between you and him."

Rosalind's face became a trifle hard in its expression as she replied:

"Don't waste your time over such an unprofitable task as that, Lord Bracknell, but tell me, if you know all about it, how this engagement came to grief."

"It was the lady's fault, of course," replied the earl, with a slight sneer. "Miss Bellford could not be satisfied with the attentions of Oaklands only, and happening to meet Sir Christopher Drake in London she went out driving with him, and allowed him to be seen with her so much in public that Oaklands heard of it, and went in a state of red-hot wrath to remonstrate with her. I understand that he found Sir Christopher in the drawing-room when he called, and that there was a scene either then or later. In any case, the engagement was broken off, and now he is anxious to return to his old allegiance."

"Is Miss Bellford going to marry Sir Christopher Drake now?" asked Rosalind, ignoring her companion's last remark.

"Not that I know of—indeed, I should say most certainly not," replied Lord Bracknell, gravely. "Drake is too much of a man of the world to walk into such a palpable trap; it took everybody's breath away when Oaklands proposed to her."

Rosalind made no reply.

She was thinking of Edith Bellford and her mother and of the man who had proposed to the former within an hour of having proposed to herself, and Lord Bracknell, who was jealously watching her changing countenance, was for the moment quite forgotten.

Suddenly she was recalled to the present by Lord Bracknell asking, in a strangely strained tone:

"You don't love him, Rosalind?"

"Love him! Love whom?" she asked, slightly bewildered.

"Lord Oaklands."

She began to laugh in sheer amusement and derision at such a suggestion, but the expression of her companion's face startled her into terrible earnestness and gravity as he said:

"Then I may tell you that I love you, passionately, devotedly, as I have never loved any woman yet—as I have never thought it possible to love. From the first moment that I saw your pure, beautiful face I felt that you were my destiny. Oh, Rosalind, tell me that my love is not all in vain."

Her face had become very white as he thus spoke.

Her big violet eyes seemed to grow and dilate with very horror and amazement.

Involuntarily she had brought her horse to a standstill, while she looked at the man who had thus dared to give utterance to his infamous thoughts, and when he paused for a reply she asked, in strangely quiet tones:

"Have you forgotten that you have a wife, Lord Bracknell?"

"A wife!" he repeated, passionately. "A block of ice, a statue as cold as marble and as hard—utterly devoid of every tender feeling. She is no wife to me. I have never loved her; now I loathe her, as standing between you and me. But she will not be a legal obstacle long, for she will obtain a divorce, and then I can marry you. That is what I wish to do, my beautiful darling, to devote the rest of my life to trying to make you happy. I have already made all arrangements, you have but to consent and we can fly together—we will not even return to the Towers again."

As Rosalind listened to this degrading proposal her heart seemed to stand still.

She scarcely appeared to breathe, and when he paused for a reply, and would have taken her hand, she made her horse back a pace or two as she quietly asked, though her countenance seemed to belie the calmness of her words:

"Do you really mean what you say?"

"Mean it? Yes," he exclaimed, passionately. "I have meant it from the first, but I had to be careful in wooing you with such dragons as my wife and your aunt looking on, but you must have understood, you must have felt the passion that consumed me. I have known, though you have not said it, that your indifference to the attentions of other men was because you loved me—because you were ready to fly to my arms when I said come."

The girl's indignation as the man made this unwarrantable assertion overcame all other considerations.

Her face lost its pallor and flushed with anger, her large eyes flashed passionate scorn as she said:

"Love you—a married man, a man old enough to be my father! No, Lord Bracknell. The reason why I am indifferent to the attentions of all men save one, whom you do not know, is that I have loved that one from my childhood, and am engaged to marry him. I hope this information will dispel all illusions you have framed concerning me."

"And you do not love me—you will not fly with me?"

"Most decidedly not. And after what you have said I will never enter your house again. You can tell my aunt that I am gone to South Hall, where she can follow me if she likes."

"But, Rosalind! I will not lose you like this, I will—"

She gave the rein to her horse, struck it sharply on the shoulder, and the next instant she was riding swiftly away, but not in the direction of Bracknell Towers.

Lord Bracknell paused for a second or two, completely bewildered by the unexpected course the affair had taken.

Then the natural horror of a man of the world at the notion of producing a scandal from which there could be derived neither pleasure nor profit made him feel that she must not go away like this, driven from his house as it were by his conduct, and he set spurs to his horse and galloped after her.

She heard him coming.

She urged the fine, thoroughbred mare she was riding to her utmost speed and was gradually increasing the distance between herself and her pursuer when, just as she had cleared a ditch, a man sprang from behind a hedge and made a desperate effort to seize her rein.

She was mad with terror, wild with anger and indignation, and, scarcely knowing what she did, she slashed his face with her riding-whip with all her strength.

The next instant she was free.

The mare, now more terrified than her rider, rushed along at headlong speed.

Rosalind was a splendid horsewoman, or she could never have kept her seat.

But, after a time, when Vixen found she was not being pursued, she calmed down, and Rosalind cantered along without further adventure.

Darkness was setting in, and a fine, soft rain had been falling for some time, when the girl rode into the small town where was the nearest railway station to the Towers.

People stared at her in astonishment as she rode up to the door of the principal inn, her horse bespattered with mud and foam, and she herself showing signs of having been for many hours in the saddle.

They were still more surprised when they observed that she was not attended by a groom but was quite alone.

But she paid no heed to the expressions of wonder.

She did not even see the people.

Her mind was filled with indignation at the gross insult which had been cast upon her and with bitter anger against the man who had thought so meanly of her as to believe she could be capable of becoming his victim.

Absorbed by this feeling, all minor sensations failed to make any impression upon her; and she was not overcome by fatigue or fear.

Having dismounted and entered the inn, she inquired when the next train for London was due, asked for pen, ink, and paper, scribbled a few lines to her aunt, and gave orders that her horse should be rubbed down and fed; then taken with the note to Bracknell Towers.

It was not until she had taken her ticket and was safely in a railway carriage on her way to London—through which she would have to pass to get to South Hall—that she began to realise that she was cold and wet, and very hungry, having been in the saddle the whole day and eaten nothing since breakfast.

It was useless thinking of her discomforts, however; they were things which had to be borne.

In the step she had taken she had acted solely upon impulse, and now, shivering, cold, and hungry, she began to regret that she had been so precipitate.

Of course she could not have spent another night under Lord Bracknell's roof, after his infamous proposals, but she could have ridden back to the Towers, have told her aunt, and then have left the place with Lady Mabel immediately, even though they had been obliged to take refuge for the night at the village inn.

Or, if she had felt it impossible to cross Lord Bracknell's threshold again she could still have gone to the inn where she left the horse, and have sent for her aunt, and remained there until Lady Mabel arrived.

But she had not taken either of these more prudent courses, she had simply rushed off without thought or consideration, and at the time without care respecting the scandal that her conduct would provoke.

As she sat alone in the railway carriage thinking of this and listening to the rain which

beat upon the windows and shivering at the gusts of wind that howled and shrieked as the train dashed on its way, she heartily wished that she had taken a little more thought in her anger.

Never in her life until now had she travelled alone, and though she knew where she was going she now felt that getting to her destination would be a matter of no slight discomfort and difficulty.

Fortunately she had more than sufficient money with her for her purpose, but she was dressed in her high hat and riding habit, she had no maid or footman or even a friend to attend her and she was fully conscious that this was by no means the condition in which she ought to be travelling about the country.

Once or twice when the train stopped a guard looked in at the window—suspiciously she at first thought—but, when they arrived at Peterborough, he asked, politely:

"Can I get anything for you, miss?"

"Oh, thank you! I should be so glad of a cup of tea or a glass of wine and a biscuit," she replied, timidly.

The man brought some refreshments for her. He was struck by her beauty, her youth and her strangely solitary condition, and it scarcely required his experience of the world to tell him that some more than ordinary circumstance had induced a young lady in riding costume to be travelling about at that hour of the night.

She was returning the empty cup, for it was within a minute or two of the time for starting again, when, looking out, she saw her cousin, Lord Dunmow, come on the platform and make haste to get into a carriage further down.

"Call that gentleman!" she said, eagerly, "I want him."

The man looked at her in surprise and a doubt concerning the fair passenger crossed his mind for an instant.

But Rosalind said, with the natural impetuosity of one accustomed to be obeyed:

"Make haste or you will lose sight of him! Tell him his cousin wants him—quickly."

The guard seeing she meant what she said somewhat reluctantly obeyed her and touched Lord Dunmow on the arm just as he was shutting himself into a smoking compartment.

"My cousin wants me!" repeated the young man, angrily, "I have only one cousin and she can't be here."

"She's a lady, sir, and alone and dressed in a riding habit and—"

Before he could say another word Dunmow had stepped past him.

He remembered his mother's remark that she was convinced that Rosalind would one day do something that would make her the heroine of some social scandal, and, fearing lest the prediction might be about to be fulfilled, he hastened, followed by the guard, to the carriage.

"Rosalind!" he exclaimed, in anger and surprise.

"Dunmow, I am so glad I caught sight of you," she exclaimed, in a tone of relief, "are you going to London?"

"Yes, but where is Lady Mabel?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Time's up," said the guard, who had listened to these questions; "get in here, sir, or smoking carriage!"

Dunmow hesitated; he was somewhat bewildered, but Rosalind, who saw that he was annoyed and angry with her, said:

"Go and smoke, only look out for me at King's Cross—I am going on to South Hall."

There was no time for hesitation, Dunmow sprang into a smoking carriage, the doors were slammed and the train moved out of the station.

"Queer start," muttered the guard to himself, "he called her Rosalind, and it's a pretty name, and he asked about Lady Mabel, whoever she may be. They ain't spooney, that's quite clear. By the way, what can his name be? She called him Dunmow. I wonder if he's a lord; shouldn't be surprised. They've both got that high and mighty way with them, though I don't suppose they mean it, as though other folks was only born to do their bidding."

Something connected with the train claimed Mr. Dawe's attention at this time, but the names of "Rosalind, Lady Mabel and Dunmow" were pretty firmly fixed upon his mind, though he did not know then that he would ever have reason to remember them.

When the train reached King's Cross Lord Dunmow went to Rosalind's carriage and led her to one of the waiting-rooms in which a large, cheerful fire was burning.

He had come to the conclusion that wherever she was going, he must see her safely to her destination, but, at the same time, he felt more anxious than curious to know what brought her here.

She did not keep him long waiting, but in a few indignant words told him the substance of what Lord Bracknell had said to her and described her own impetuous anger and subsequent flight.

"And what I told him is quite true," she continued, with a dash of defiance in her tone. "I have promised to marry Harry Harcourt, and I likewise promised him that if I were ever in any danger or difficulty I would go straight to his mother, and I am on my way to her now."

"But in this dress, and without even your maid with you!" expostulated Dunmow, a trifle severely, "besides," he added, "Aunt Mabel was not to blame on this occasion and I don't think you should have left her protection in this manner."

"No, I felt that when I was in the train, but it was too late to go back then; however, I sent her a note and she knows where I am going."

"Well, I suppose I must go with you," said the young man.

"Yes, I wish you would" was the reply; "people stare at me so, and I feel so strange at being alone."

"No wonder," he returned. "It was one of the maddest things possible, your coming away like this. But it is useless crying over what is past altering. I suppose the best thing to be done is to get down to Summersex without losing any time."

"Yes. But, oh! I am so hungry."

Dunmow smiled; he was becoming ravenous himself, but he said, promptly:

"We will go to Paddington and inquire about the trains. Then we can see about getting supper or breakfast, whichever it may be."

"Do you think I had better telegraph to Aunt Mabel telling her I have met you and am safe?" asked Rosalind.

"No," he replied, carelessly, "you say you have sent her a note saying where you were going."

"Yes," she returned, reluctantly.

"Then I'd leave things as they are. You can write to her to-morrow."

Rosalind acquiesced, though she felt uncomfortable in doing so.

She imagined that things were not pleasant at Bracknell Towers, but had she dreamed of anything approaching the truth she would have hastened back at once.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### BEATING THE WHIRLWIND.

Oh, there are words  
For other scenes, but none for this.

That day at Bracknell Towers passed without anything to distinguish it from other days upon which the earl and the majority of his guests went out hunting.

The countess and Lady Mabel Marmion, with several other ladies and two or three gentlemen likewise on a visit, amused themselves with reading or fancy work, or writing letters—or playing billiards, as the fancy took them, for the fine, soft rain which came on soon after their return from the meet made out-of-door recreation undesirable.

By-and-bye stragglers came in from the hunt.

They had lost the fox or they had lost the hounds, they found the weather too unpleasant,

or they had come to grief in some fashion or other, and they had all to change their wet, mud-bespattered garments, and most of them had their own stories to tell of the day's events.

At length, when darkness had set in and the dinner-hour was drawing near, some one of the party asked, casually:

"Has Lord Bracknell returned?"

"No," said one.

"He may be in his dressing-room," suggested another.

"He was riding with Miss Redesdale, and engaged in earnest conversation when I last saw him," volunteered a third.

Whereupon a meaning smile came over the faces of many, though it was politely smoothed away as Lady Bracknell herself approached.

She asked no questions about her husband, but she looked round for Rosalind, and then, thinking she had probably come in late, and was under the hands of her maid, her eyes sought Lady Mabel Marmion.

But her ladyship was not in the drawing-rooms, and it was not until the second dinner-bell rang that Lady Mabel made her appearance looking troubled and anxious.

"Rosalind has not returned," she said, going up to the countess. "I am afraid lest she may have met with some accident."

"And Lord Bracknell has not come back," here volunteered one of the guests. "I have just inquired for him."

Lady Bracknell's face became a trifle paler than usual, but no suspicion of the truth entered her mind, and she asked calmly when her husband or Miss Redesdale had last been seen.

Then she learnt they had been seen together, and she replied, in a more assured tone:

"If they are together they will be all right. Perhaps one of their horses has become lame, or they may be taking shelter from the rain. We won't wait for them."

Then she went in to dinner, and took her seat at table as usual.

She did not eat much herself, but she smiled and chatted as though it were nothing unusual for the master of the house to be absent.

The person most ill at ease in the whole party was Lady Mabel Marmion.

Her keen eyes had noticed with some misgivings Lord Bracknell's infatuation for her niece.

More than once she had seriously meditated taking the girl away from his dangerous vicinity, but she had private reasons of her own for wishing to remain, and Rosalind's evident unconsciousness and want of susceptibility had convinced her ladyship that her niece was quite safe, and, as for his lordship, well, he must take care of himself.

That is what her conclusions, if put into words, would have amounted to, and she would not have been in the least degree surprised if Rosalind had come to her angry and indignant at any time during their visit, and insisted upon going away from Bracknell Towers without an hour's delay. In that case her selfish and unscrupulous ladyship would have been as virtuously indignant as her niece, for although all men might admire the girl, no man who was not legally free to marry should, according to her code of morals, presume to speak of love, though of course he would be perfectly welcome to suffer in silence.

So Lady Mabel had been quite content for Rosalind and herself to be living on the edge of a volcano, until the danger that had threatened seemed as if it had overtaken them.

Had Rosalind or his lordship alone been missing matters would not be so bad, but for both to be absent, and to have been last seen together, seemed, from her ladyship's point of view, to be suspicious in the extreme.

It was with the utmost difficulty that Lady Mabel could sit through the seemingly interminable courses of dinner, and when at length she left the dining-room she entreated Lady Bracknell to question the servants and send out some of them to look for Rosalind and their master.

Lady Bracknell by this time needed but little persuasion to do so.

She was herself getting suspicious as well as anxious. Her lord was not so invariably punctual as to occasion her any alarm upon his account solely, but when he had a young and beautiful girl with him—a girl who was his wife's guest—it was in a measure compromising to all parties for those two to be absent together in this mysterious manner.

And meanwhile the rain, which had been coming down like a thick mist during the latter part of the afternoon, had now changed to a wild and heavy downfall, while the wind, which had been rising for the last hour, howled around the mansion and shook the trees in the park as though it would strip them of their leafless branches.

A very tempest was raging outside Bracknell Towers, but it was as nothing in fury and intensity compared to the storm of jealous rage and maddening desolation that was gathering in the heart of the countess.

Despite the fury of the elements, she had sent men off to look for her husband, and then, moved by a strange impulse, she betook herself to her husband's private rooms.

It was years since her feet had crossed the threshold of his chamber, but a strange feeling was upon her to-night, and she astonished the valet not a little by walking into the large bedroom and with a movement of the hand ordering him to leave the room.

A large wood fire was burning on the hearth, and she walked towards it, then sat down to watch the burning embers, to listen to the storm, and to think over the long, barren years of her married life.

Her heart ached as she remembered what she had suffered so long and in silence, and it was with a strange mixture of pity for herself and pity for the man who had caused her so much anguish that she at length rose to her feet and began to look about the handsome room.

It was all strangely and sadly familiar to her, like a well-known melody of her early girlhood.

The splendidly-appointed chamber, with its three large windows, with the dressing-room on one side, and facing it at the opposite end of the room a door which led into what her husband used to call his snuggery.

She remembered the place well. The happiest hours of her life had been spent in this "snuggery," and now she pushed open the closed door and entered.

Here also a fire was burning, and a shaded lamp was lighted.

She paused as one pauses on the brink of some dreaded tragedy, then she walked straight to the table and lifted the cover of an unlocked desk.

Years ago, in the early days of their marriage, she and her husband used to leave notes for each other in this spot, and now, by a kind of instinct, she felt that if he had gone away with the intention of not returning, she would find a message here.

It was so. Facing her as she lifted the lid was a letter in her husband's handwriting addressed to herself.

Calmly and mechanically she took it up, broke the seal and sat down to read the contents.

"We have made each other miserable for twenty years," the letter ran. "the legal chain that binds us has galled both of us intolerably, and now I am taking a step that will enable you to obtain your freedom and give me mine. You may make your own terms with regard to money, but let our hollow farce of keeping up appearances end."

This was not signed.

Only the envelope in which it was enclosed was addressed to her.

But reading the words and also reading between the lines Lady Bracknell understood all that it was intended to convey.

Her husband had left her, he wished her to obtain a divorce so that he might bring the fair young girl whom she had liked and almost loved to come and reign in her place.

"Never!" she vowed, while her face grew hard and her lips became white, "never!"

She paused a few seconds, then she went on as though she were uttering a curse.

"He has brought disgrace and infamy upon her and she shall live in it. No child of hers while I breathe shall be the heir of Bracknell. She shall live in her sin and it shall cling to her like a plague."

So saying Lady Bracknell crushed the letter in her hand and walked steadily and firmly to her own rooms.

Her mind was firmly made up.

She had no anxiety about her husband or about Rosalind now.

They had gone away together. On that point she had no doubt.

Gone away, counting upon her giving her perfidious husband his freedom to marry again, or, failing her compliance, counting on her death.

But she would not seek a divorce, and, if she could help it, she certainly would not die.

Her first act upon regaining her own apartments was to send for Lady Mabel Marmion.

"I thought I would relieve your mind of needless anxiety," she said, calmly and bitterly, "your niece has eloped with my husband."

In her secret heart Lady Mabel had been telling herself the same story, though all the time she could not really believe it.

But when the tale was repeated by another her ladyship's incredulity flashed forth at once, and she exclaimed, disdainfully:

"Preposterous!"

"It is true, nevertheless," said the countess, coldly, "read that," and she handed her husband's letter to her companion, who read it calmly, then returned it without a word of comment.

"Well?" asked Lady Bracknell, sharply, "what is your opinion now?"

"It remains unchanged," was Lady Mabel's cool reply.

"But my husband says distinctly in that paper that he is going to elope with her."

"Pardon me, Lady Bracknell, your husband implies that, for the sake of enabling you to obtain a divorce, he is going to elope with some one. It may be a dairymaid for aught we know."

"But your niece is missing, she was last seen with him, I have heard remarks this evening which implied that he admired her. The circumstantial evidence is conclusive, Lady Mabel."

"And still I don't believe it," returned Lady Mabel, doggedly. "That Lord Bracknell admired my niece I grant," she went on, "but an elopement means the consent of two people to an arrangement of the kind, and Rosalind had everything to lose and nothing whatever to gain by such a step."

"You forget that he may have held out to her the prospect of my abdication in her favour," sneered the countess.

"And what if he had? What temptation could that be to her?" asked Lady Mabel, hotly; "she has refused a better offer than, in his best days, the Earl of Bracknell could have made her. Even now Lord Oaklands would give his head to marry her. But wealth and rank cannot tempt Rosalind. My belief is that she long since made up her mind to marry a certain individual, a man who has neither rank nor fortune and who is not even of good family, though by the help and patronage of those who ought to know better he has just become a Member of Parliament. I am quite convinced that this infatuation alone would save her from becoming your husband's victim."

"But if you are right, where can she be?" asked Lady Bracknell, slowly.

Whereupon Lady Mabel shrugged her shoulders.

She had talked herself into the belief of her niece's innocence of the charge brought against her and she found this standpoint much more satisfactory to her own importance and self-love than any other.

No news came of either of the missing couple.

Several servants had gone out with lanterns, had wandered about aimlessly and returned drenched, and the steward came to Lady Bracknell to report failure, and plainly indicated the direction his own suspicions took by asking if he



[HIS LORDSHIP'S MAN.]

should send a mounted messenger to the railway station, six miles off, to inquire if his lordship or the young lady had been seen there.

But Lady Bracknell, with this letter in her hand, had relinquished all hope.

She would not worry or agitate herself. She would not do or think of anything that should shorten her life by one day or one hour. She would live a loveless, selfish life, so that her husband might be thwarted in his desire for another wife and a legitimate heir.

Therefore she gave orders that the search was to be suspended, and the guests were severally informed, through the steward, that Lord Bracknell had gone away not intending to return, and it was politely hinted at the same time that under the circumstances their visit had better terminate.

This was late at night.

Nothing could be done till the morning, and the household at length retired to rest, most of them in their own minds putting the worst possible construction upon the simultaneous disappearance of their host and our heroine.

Soon after midnight, however, one of the stable keepers was roused from his sleep by hearing above the noise caused by the wind and the rain the distinct neighing of a horse.

"There's summat up," he muttered, in a discontented tone, "and if my lord should come back and there's ort wrong with he's hunters there'll be the dickens to pay. I'd best go down."

And down he went.

But the inmates of the stables were all quiet, though they also had heard the neighing and had been disturbed by it.

Again the cry was repeated.

Following the sound the man went to the gates leading into the stable-yard, opened them, and there, wet, mud-stained, shivering, and riderless, stood the horse which Lord Bracknell had ridden during the latter part of that day.

The poor creature was taken to its stall, and then the man roused his fellow helpers, and the horse was rubbed down and provided with a

warm mash and a dry bed and everything possible was done for its recovery and comfort.

But all the time the wonder as to its master's fate increased; with the horse in this deplorable state, what had become of its rider?

So serious did the outlook appear that the servants at last determined to awaken the countess and tell her what had happened.

Lady Bracknell, however, refused to take the same view of the matter as did her servants, so no second party of search was organised, and the cold, dark hours wore on.

It was quite eight o'clock the next morning when a man, mounted on a hack and leading a thorough-bred mare and carrying a lady's saddle, presented himself at Bracknell Towers.

He was the bearer of a note to Lady Mabel Marmion, and he explained that the young lady who had written the letter had given orders that her horse should be rubbed down and fed and brought back the same night.

"But maister knowed better than to do that with a valuable mare like this 'un, so we kep' 'er all night and the letter too."

The note was taken to Lady Mabel Marmion, and she, flushed and excited with its contents and the intense relief it gave her, hastily pulled on a dressing-gown and went to Lady Bracknell's room.

"I was right, you see," she exclaimed, in triumph. "Read that."

The countess took the hastily-scrawled epistle in her hand, glanced at it, then gave it back, saying:

"I cannot see—read it to me."

"MY DEAR AUNT," read Lady Mabel, "Lord Bracknell has grossly insulted me by proposing that I should elope with him. After this it is impossible for me to return to his house or partake of his hospitality for another hour. I am sending this to you by the man who will bring Vixen back. I am going straight to my Uncle Vane at South Hall. I will wait there for you or I will come to you at any place but Bracknell Towers. Make any excuse you can to Lady Bracknell, and try to spare her from the know-

ledge of her husband's worthlessness. I am just in time for the train to London.—Your distracted niece,  
ROSALIND REDESDALE."

"This ought to have arrived last night," said Lady Mabel, as she folded up the letter.

"But what has become of my husband?" asked Lady Bracknell, in a dazed manner.

The continued excitement was telling upon her.

Rosalind's note might satisfy her aunt, but it offered no consolation to the jealous and deserted wife.

She would have believed that he had gone away alone, overcome with rage and disappointment at Rosalind's rejection of him, but if he had done so why leave his horse to find its way home through such a storm?

However cruel he might be to her, he was tender and considerate enough to all dumb animals, and he would have taken his horse with him or have sent it home if he had possessed the power.

But while the countess thus sat and pondered and wondered other persons were more active.

Rosalind's letter dispelled the first-formed suspicion that the master of the Towers and she had gone away together, and the return of his riderless horse suggested that the owner had met with an accident or was the victim of foul play.

So, as soon as the news transpired, several parties of men went out in various directions to scour the country in search of the missing earl.

But they had not many miles to go.

Starting from the field where Rosalind and he had last been seen together, they found, a quarter of a mile further on, the mangled remains of Lord Bracknell lying in a ditch.

Had they known it this was close to the very spot where Rosalind had last seen him, and exactly where the man had endeavoured to snatch at her rein.

(To be Continued.)



[BORROWED PLUMES.]

## A ROMANCE OF BRIGHTON PIER. (A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

#### REJECTED.

At this season of the year, when most of us have been taking a summer holiday, and not a few have wended their way to the queen of southern watering-places, it seems a good opportunity to tell you a romance of Brighton Pier, the true story of two young hearts, which adds yet another proof to the many witnessing to the truth of the old saying, "True love never runs smooth."

Clive Ernstone was not what people call a handsome man, his features were too irregular for that, but he had a broad, open forehead and dark, thoughtful grey eyes, which made children trust him and careless people fear him. He was so terribly earnest himself in all that he undertook it was little wonder the changeable and thoughtless did not care to face the scrutiny of his dark eyes.

Fortune could hardly be said to smile on Clive. Her fickle ladyship had dealt him several severe blows. First he came of a grand old family, and was brought up as became a rich man's son, then when he was eighteen his father died, the estate was mortgaged up to the hilt and creditors clamoured eagerly for payment.

They did not clamour in vain. When Clive Ernstone came of age he sold off his ancient homestead, the stately mansion which had belonged to the Ernstones for so many generations, he paid his father's debts in full, and saved the honour of his name, and then he

went forth into the world to fight life's battle as best he could, alone, unaided, his only fortune an unblemished reputation, and all that remained to him of the Ernstone possessions the grand motto of his race, "Faithful unto death."

All that was long ago, now Clive Ernstone was a grave, thoughtful man of seven-and-twenty, a fellow of his college, a famous University coach, with no other home than his rooms at Trinity, and no other interest, people said, than his professional calling.

"What are you going to do this Long?"

It was a young undergraduate, one of his favourite pupils, who put this question to him as they sat together one July evening in Mr. Ernstone's rooms.

The coach stretched himself wearily.

"I hardly know."

"Take a holiday," cried Gerald, eagerly.

"What is the good of plodding on from year's end to year's end as you do? One would think you were a miser."

Clive Ernstone laughed, he could not help it at this description of himself. He who cared less for money than any man alive, and who worked thus unceasingly only because apart from work there seemed to be nothing to fill his life.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," quoted Gerald Shean, audaciously. "You'll get old before your time, Ernstone; I think I can see the silver threads peeping now among your raven locks."

"At least, you take care not to become a dull boy," returned the tutor, good-humouredly; "no one in the world could accuse you of making your life all work and no play."

"It wouldn't suit me—life's too short to make a toil of."

"I am not quite sure that what you call enjoyment would not weary me more than all my work."

"No, I don't make a toil of a pleasure, I'm not like the people who come up to London prepared to see everything in it in a week, or who profess to 'do' the Lakes in a fortnight, I take life easily."

"In what particular quarter of the globe are you going to spend the Long easily?"

A cloud, a real cloud, albeit a very small one, passed over the brightness of the young man's face.

"I shan't enjoy my holidays particularly. I am going to pay a duty visit to an uncle I have never seen."

Ernstone raised his eyebrows, it was the only mark of astonishment he permitted himself.

"He's as rich as Croesus and as cross as an old Nabob without any digestion. My father quarrelled with my aunt when she married him years ago. However, he's got on; he's what people call a City magnate, and so my people think it worth while to conciliate him, and I am to be the sacrifice offered up to fraternal affection. He has no son and has offered to 'do something' for me, so I'm to be sent off forthwith."

"To the City for August?"

"Not quite so bad as that, the old boy has a splendid place a few miles out of Brighton, it's there the sacrifice—I mean the visit—is to take place."

He pushed back his light brown hair carelessly as he spoke. The handsomest man in his college, the best oar of that year, people had done their utmost to spoil him, and perhaps it was hardly his fault if they had almost succeeded.

"I wish you'd come too," he said to Clive, after a pause, rather awkwardly, as though not quite sure how his invitation would be received. "He's particularly told me to bring a friend with me."

"My dear fellow, I haven't paid a visit for years, you'd better find a more congenial spirit."

But it was not exactly a refusal, and Gerald Shean persevered.

"I'd rather have you, because, you see," with singular frankness, "it will give me such an air of steady respectability to introduce a sensible fellow like you—the mantle of your virtues will fall upon me and cover a few of my defects."

"I don't believe you thought you had any, Gerald."

The young man flushed like a child.

"Hang it, Ernstone, I wouldn't stand it from anyone else. I'm not straight-laced and all that but I'm not so very bad."

"I never said you were."

"Well, will you come down to my uncle's and try to endow him with your views?"

"I'm not fit for society, Gerald. I tell you it's years since I have seen any but that of grave old fogies like myself."

"Well, I shall write and tell my uncle that we are coming. I hope he'll make us comfortable—my aunt's dead, but I suppose he has a house-keeper of some kind."

Mr. Shean had no sooner departed than his coach regretted his acceptance—he hated visiting.

Why should he spend his rare leisure in listening to the business prosings of a City millionaire? He liked Gerald certainly, but anyone else could have done as much for that young gentleman's interests as himself, or even more.

But his word was his bond, even in the matter of a pleasure excursion. He never once thought of drawing back, and so one bright August afternoon he met Gerald by appointment at the Victoria Station, and the two started by the four-o'clock train for the nearest stopping place to Elmwood, the village where Mr. Smith's estate was situated.

"Horrid name Smith," commented Gerald, freely speaking his mind, as, indeed, he did at most times.

"Easy to spell," returned Clive; "besides, what's in a name?"

"I wonder my aunt chose to assume it; Shean isn't a very charming cognomen, but it's far better than Smith."

But when Mr. Shean saw the handsome carriage and dashing boys sent to meet them at the station he relented and began to think that if so many of life's good things would come to him with the name of Smith he would not object to take it himself.

It was a lovely drive. Three or four miles through magnificent scenery in one of the most rural spots of Sussex, and then on through an avenue of stately trees to a rambling, old-fashioned mansion built of white stone, more suited for comfort than show perhaps, yet perfect in all its details, and impossible, at the first glance to mistake for anything but a rich man's home.

"My master is out," said the butler, a portly individual, whom Ernstone had privately put down as Mr. Smith himself, "but the young ladies are in the drawing-room."

The young ladies! Neither of the visitors asked any question, but they were both profoundly astonished—they had believed Mr. Smith to be a childless widower.

In perfect silence then they followed their conductor to a door on the first floor, which he threw open, announcing:

"Mr. Shean and Mr. Ernstone."

It was a spacious room, furnished with more taste in ebony and pale blue. There were many marks of wealth about it, but none of pretension.

Two girls came forward to greet their visitors. They were dressed alike in white—soft, filmy muslin trimmed with lace, the only difference being that one had ribbons of turquoise blue, while the other had chosen bows of a vivid crimson.

The latter spoke first, and addressed herself to Gerald.

"Papa will be so sorry to have missed you. I expect him in every minute. Will you introduce me to your friend?"

Gerald performed the introduction in due form, and then expressed his surprise at finding himself possessed of so fair a relative.

"Did you really think papa had no daughter?"

"I confess I quite ignored the fact, but that makes the discovery only a greater pleasure."

She laughed, not ill-pleased at the compliment.

"I hope we shall be good friends. Evelyn," to the younger girl, "this is my cousin, you must help me to entertain him and Mr. Ernstone."

The young lady in blue seemed afflicted with an intense desire to laugh, but she controlled it admirably, and answered, demurely:

"I will do my best, Violet."

"Are you not another cousin?" asked Gerald.

She laughed outright at that.

"I am only Violet's friend, though my name is the same as hers. Two Miss Smiths and no relations to each other, it is rather puzzling sometimes."

"It is curious."

Violet seemed hardly to approve of the conversation; she rang the bell for a servant to show the gentlemen to their rooms.

They had not been gone five minutes when Mr. Smith himself returned—a florid, bustling man of about sixty.

"Well, girls, so you've got your visitors: what do you think of them?"

"We can hardly tell," said Evelyn, with a smile. "Gerald is very good-looking."

"And the other is nice," admitted Violet. "I should think he is clever," with which remark she left the room.

The girl who was left—the one who had assured Gerald that she was only Violet's friend—came up to the old gentleman and laid one hand caressingly upon his coat-sleeve.

"Papa, I wish you wouldn't go on with this."

"Tut, tut," returned Mr. Smith, good-naturedly, "you just leave matters to me, 'I know what I am about, Miss Evelyn.'"

"But papa, it is so awkward. I feel as if I were telling over so many stories."

"Look here," said her father, gravely, "listen to me quietly, Evelyn. When I married your mother her whole family turned their backs upon me. I don't blame them. She might have made a much better match than I was then."

Evelyn attempted a faint denial.

"She might indeed, pussy. But now that I am a rich man, with enough to buy up Sir Henry Shean's property over and over again, they can remember my existence."

"Gerald did not look mercenary, papa."

"He may not be. No sooner did Sir Henry find out that I had a daughter likely to be my sole heiress than he wrote off proposing a marriage between her and his son. He sent off Gerald on this visit in complete ignorance of his designs. I give the boy that credit."

"He didn't even know he had a cousin, papa," returned Miss Evelyn.

"Well, I've only you to think about, Evy; and I don't care to see you married only because you're to have a large fortune some day. So when my brother-in-law's letter came I thought the matter over, and this is what I made of it. You had a companion about your own age, whose surname being the same as yours could be introduced to your cousin as Miss Smith, all the servants calling you, Miss Evelyn. I knew that if I was careful myself there would be no chance of the secret leaking out. Violet doesn't dislike the part she has to play at all. If young Shean takes a fancy to her there's no harm done. She's a lady every inch of her, and I'll see she doesn't go to him empty-handed. But if he has the sense to prefer my little girl, even when thinking her a penniless orphan, I shall have a better opinion of his perceptions, and trust her to him without any anxiety."

"But it does seem deceitful, papa."

"If the boy proposes to Violet, it must be for one of two reasons—either he cares about her, or he thinks she is my heiress. If the first he won't care how poor she is; if the last he'll be rightly punished."

"And poor Vi, papa."

"My dear, Violet Smith won't break her heart about any man, she's much too sensible. You've been together for a good many years, but you're made of very different stuff. I never saw a young woman better qualified to take care of herself than Violet Smith."

"Perhaps it's as well," said Evelyn, reflectively. "You see I've got you to take care of me, papa, and poor Violet has no one."

"She doesn't need any one, my dear."

The greeting between Mr. Smith and his guests was cordial, if not warm. Gerald bore a striking resemblance to his aunt, and for this reason the old man must have received him kindly. Besides, Mr. Smith was most hospitable. Anyone beneath his roof would have nothing to complain of in their treatment.

Dinner was soon announced. Gerald offered his arm to Violet, and Clive escorted Evelyn.

One word in description of the two girls. They bore a singular contrast in appearance, and although for years Violet had been an inmate of Elm Court, and shared the careful training bestowed on Evelyn, they were also a striking contrast in character.

Evelyn was small, and delicately made. There was a certain fragility about her looks which, though it might awake anxious fears, yet took nothing from her beauty. She had large, dark blue eyes, fringed with thick lashes, whilst her hair—strange contradiction—was of the purest, deepest golden brown. It was thick and abundant, and she wore it coiled simply round her head. Her complexion was of a soft, creamy tint, equally removed from the pallor of sickness and the glow of health. She was singularly graceful in all her movements, and there was about her a certain aristocratic bearing which reminded you that if she was the child of a self-made man her mother had been the daughter and sister of an English baronet of long descent and high degree.

Violet Smith, on the contrary, was tall. She promised to be a magnificent woman. At present she was a fine-looking girl, with black eyes and hair, an animated, attractive face, a good figure, and a full share of abilities. If she married a nobleman she would adapt herself to her new position, and never cause him to blush for his wife, but she would never look one born to the rank like Evelyn.

It was a very cheerful meal that first dinner at Elm Court; the host and Gerald exchanged a few remarks about the Shean family, as Mr. Smith had known them long ago, but for the most part the old gentleman talked to Mr. Ernstone and left his nephew free to make himself agreeable to Violet. He had gathered from Gerald's letter that Clive was poor, and he was anxious on that account to make him thoroughly at home.

There was nothing of purse-pride about Mr. Smith, he knew an honest man when he met one and he had a great respect for learning.

Perhaps the most silent person at the table was Evelyn Smith; she alone felt the peculiarity of the position in which her father's zeal had placed her.

As a cousin she could have welcomed Gerald warmly, but now she felt that a companion should not show too much interest in Sir Henry Shean's son.

Clive would have been more approachable, but her father monopolised him. It was a real relief to the true heiress when the supposed one gave the signal for them to retire to the drawing-room and leave the gentlemen over their wine.

"He is charming!" cried Violet, when the two girls found themselves alone and had established themselves after their wont, the one in a low carved prie-dieu sort of chair, the other sitting bolt upright on the sofa. It was one of the tell-tale marks of Violet's origin that she could never look at ease doing nothing.

"Who?" asked Evelyn, a little absently.

"Your cousin, be sure. Do you mean to say you are not proud of him?"

"I have hardly thought about it yet, I dare say he is a very nice boy."

"Boy?" disdaintfully. "Why, your papa told us he was twenty-one before he came."

"Did he?"

"Evelyn, you are too provoking; don't you really take any interest in Mr. Shean?"

"Yes," thoughtfully. "If he knew I was his cousin I should like to ask him about a great many things—whether mamma's old rooms have been

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altered and if they have the likeness of her at the Hall which was painted when papa first knew her."

Violet stamped her foot a little provokingly; to talk to a baronet's heir about such things as these was, in her opinion, complete waste of time. Mr. Smith's plan had charmed her if it had displeased his daughter.

Violet had a great belief in her own powers; why should she not marry Gerald and become, in course of time, Lady Shean and mistress of the Hall? But before that happy result could be achieved there were just a few particulars she wished to know. Miss Violet Smith was a young lady who strongly objected to working in the dark.

"Has he many brothers and sisters?"  
"Who? Gerald? Yes, there is a large family; two of the daughters are married, one is a viscountess. I should like to know them," a little wistfully, "I suppose they are very beautiful."

"And Mr. Shean is the eldest son?"  
"The eldest of the whole family, I believe."  
"Sir Gerald Shean," musingly, "it sounds nice."

"But he won't be Sir Gerald for many years yet. Uncle Henry is quite a young man, only four-and-forty; besides, he has so many children he can't do much for Gerald yet. I believe he is to go into some profession when he leaves Oxford."

Violet decided her scheme was not worth while.

"He won't need to if he marries you."  
The hot colour crimsoned Evelyn's cheek. There were times when Violet jarred on her, much as she loved her.

"Do not speak of that," she said, gently, "it is most unlikely."

"But every one wishes it."  
"Not every one, Sir Henry suggested it—"  
"And Mr. Shean would be sure to wish what his father wished."

"You imagine Gerald a very dutiful son."  
"But if he married without Sir Henry's consent he might lose his prospects."

Evelyn laughed.  
"You are wrong for once, Violet. The Sheans are a very old family and the estate is entailed; a rash marriage might make Gerald's present hard, but it could not harm his future; the moment Uncle Henry dies he must be Sir Gerald Shean, master of the Hall and its revenues."

Miss Violet decided it was worth while. She had hardly come to this conclusion when the subject of their conversation entered.

"My uncle and Ernstone are smoking, they have excused my attendance, so I found my way here."

"Do you never smoke?" asked Evelyn.  
"Sometimes," coolly; she was only his cousin's friend and companion, so what right had she to cross-question him, then, turning to Violet, "but not in preference to ladies' society."

"What shall we do to deserve such a pretty compliment, Evelyn?" asked Violet, coquettishly.  
"Mr. Shean, shall I ring for lights, or would you prefer a stroll in the garden? the moon will be up soon."

She always spoke of the grounds as the garden and talked of a stroll.

"Let us go out by all means," returned Gerald. "I am longing to see the grounds, and with such a guide the expedition will be delightful."

Violet left the room to fetch a shawl, and the real cousins were left alone. It dawned on Gerald as Evelyn sat there in the twilight, her small figure half hidden by the high-backed chair, that Miss Violet had chosen a companion more graceful than herself.

"Have you known my cousin long?" he asked, more for something to say than from interest.

"We were brought up together," replied Evelyn, glad to be able to speak the truth at last.

"She is not at all like her father."  
"People say she resembles her mother."  
Gerald shook his head.

"Oh, no; we have a likeness of my aunt at

home taken before her marriage, and she is quite different from Miss Smith; in fact," with a smile, "I am considered very like her myself."

Violet returned, a lace shawl flung carelessly over her head. She went out then with Gerald through the conservatory and down the terrace steps.

Evelyn sat on with a strange feeling of uneasiness. She had never liked her father's plan—she certainly liked it less since she had seen Gerald.

The servants brought in tea and lighted the large chandelier. Her father and Mr. Ernstone entered together.

"Where are the others, Evelyn?"  
"Violet has gone to show Mr. Shean the grounds."

Mr. Smith smiled.  
Clive began to think he wished the cousins to fall in love.

"I am sure you will excuse me," said the old gentleman, when he had drunk his second cup of tea, "I have some important letters to write. Mr. Ernstone, make yourself at home, I like people not to stand on ceremony," and thereupon he vanished.

"Gerald seems to like the grounds," said Mr. Ernstone, rather at a loss for conversation when left alone with a young lady.

"The country is so beautiful at this time of year."

"Yes; Mr. Smith has a lovely place here."  
"I think Sussex is the pleasantest county in England, but my opinion does not go for much as I have never been in any other."

"Really," with a sad thought for a home in Sussex which he had been compelled to resign.  
"Do you know, Miss Evelyn, I agree with you, although I have been in many others."

"You live at Oxford, don't you—I mean your home is there?"

"I live at Oxford, if having rooms there means living. I have no home anywhere."

"No home," with a deep sympathy in her voice, "how very sad."

"I did not wish to make myself out an object for pity. I meant my rooms are at Oxford, and having no relations I rarely care to leave them."

Evelyn still looked as though she considered it a case for commiseration when the others entered.

"Ring for some more tea, Evelyn."

The heiress smiled. Violet evidently considered it a part of her role to order her companion about, for she forgot that in their true positions such was not Evelyn's practice.

The younger girl rang the bell, however, and gave the required instructions, nor when music was proposed and Violet requested her to play did she attempt to refuse. It was a splendid instrument, and Evelyn chose sweet old-fashioned melodies, not brilliant, tuneless fantasias. One, at least, of her audience was delighted.

"Evelyn is old-fashioned," said Miss Smith to Gerald, as the last chord died away. "She never will be quite like other people."

"Perhaps it is a good thing."

The heiress turned and looked at Mr. Ernstone in surprise, she could not understand his meaning, nor did he attempt to explain it.

No exact time had been named for the visit in writing to his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith had simply said he should be pleased to see Gerald and any friend of his "for a bit."

Now no vaguer term could well be mentioned, but Gerald did not trouble himself about his uncle's meaning. He had come to Sussex very much deploring his fate—he stayed on because he was enjoying himself thoroughly and time was passing like lightning.

Mr. Shean was not a particularly clever man—he had youth and good looks, fair abilities, and high-bred manners.

Violet Smith was precisely the style of girl to find out his weak points and play upon them. The moment she heard from Evelyn that whatever he did his father could not rob him of his inheritance, or one day prevent his becoming Sir Gerald Shean, Violet made up her mind that she would share both title and inheritance. She

led Gerald slowly on into a mild flirtation, she contrived later to inspire him with an intense affection, to make him believe really that all his happiness rested on her.

Before he had been a month at Elm Court he had decided that without Violet his life would be a wilderness.

He was not without a certain prudence; had he been introduced to Violet in her true character he would never have fallen in love with her, but believing her the heiress of boundless wealth he made no attempt to restrain his fancy. For once interest and inclination joined hands, he should fulfil his father's dearest wishes and at the same time marry the woman he intensely loved.

He was only twenty-one and this was his first love; he believed in Violet implicitly, the thought that she had led him on never entered his head; he would have said, rather, she repelled his attentions, for so skilful had been the young lady's conduct that she had contrived to drive her adorer to the verge of distraction and yet keep him ignorant entirely of the state of her own affections.

Perhaps the only person who clearly saw this was Clive Ernstone. He loved Gerald as a grave and thoughtful man sometimes does love one much younger and in every respect the opposite of himself. He knew quite well that Gerald's passion for Miss Smith was real and that if she were only playing with him it would be his ruin. He often thought of speaking to him on the subject, but Gerald seemed to divine his intention and avoided being alone with him scrupulously.

Poor Clive had his own anxieties. Gerald's infatuation for Violet had caused his friend to be left a great deal to Evelyn's companionship, and the grave student who had seen little of woman since the time of his great sacrifice, years before, had forgotten his uncertain means and struggling life and opened his heart to a new happiness. He had grown to love Evelyn Smith as his very soul, he believed he could teach her to love him back again; believed that even without wealth and luxuries he could make her happy.

He hesitated to speak to her, it seemed taking an advantage of her youth and inexperience, she was so pure and innocent, so gentle and true, men far higher in this world's honours would covet her for their wife; besides, to be near her only was happiness, and when the fatal words were spoken if she refused him he should have to go away back to the old life far away from the sweet face he longed to call his own.

It came at last.

One day, when August was waning Mr. Smith proposed an excursion into Brighton. He had business in the town, they would drive over early, dine and return in the cool of the evening. It seemed a simple project, but it was fraught with eventful consequences to some of those who set off so gaily.

Mr. Smith's business took him longer than he had expected; and Gerald and Violet conceived a great desire to drive to Rottingdean. As they were young people who rarely let anything interfere with their own wishes they set off, and Evelyn suggested to Clive they should go on the pier.

"I thought you hated a crowd," he said, half reproachfully.

"I meant the Chain Pier, we shall find hardly anyone there; it will be cool and pleasant."

They went. The old pier was, as Evelyn had predicted, almost deserted, most of the visitors preferred its gay rival at the west. Clive and Evelyn had a seat near the head and looked on the clear blue water. They were as much cut off from their fellow creatures, so far as interruption or interference went, as if they had been in a boat upon the broad ocean.

They had drifted into a long silence, very pleasant and sweetly dangerous. It had dawned upon Evelyn lately that she and Mr. Ernstone very often were silent when left alone together.

"How calm the sea is!"

"Yes, to look at it now, who would think it was ever rough or troubled?"

"I think," slowly, "the sea is sometimes like

real life, when we are very happy it is so hard to realise we have ever been miserable."

He looked at her quickly.

"Surely you have never been miserable, Evelyn," using her name unconsciously.

"I? Oh, no; my life has been all sunshine, my clouds are all to come."

"Evelyn," forgetting everything at those words save his great love, "will you let it be my province to shield you from all clouds, will you give yourself to me, and let me try to make you happy? I am a poor man," he went on, slowly, his voice trembling a little with deep feeling, "compared to those amongst whom your life has been spent, but indeed, my darling, I will do my best that you shall never know a sorrow."

"I love you," she answered, simply, "I think, Clive, I have loved you ever since you came to the Court, only I did not know it until you spoke."

"And I may speak to Mr. Smith?"

To his surprise she trembled.

"Clive, there is one thing I ought to tell you. It was against my wish you were deceived, only papa would have it so. Violet and I are not quite what we seem, Clive; don't you understand?"

His arm, which had been round her, unclosed. "You don't mean you are Mr. Smith's heiress?" he said, brokenly. "Oh, Evelyn, it was a cruel jest."

An explanation ensued. He could not blame her when he knew all, he saw it was no fault of hers, but the fact remained she was lost to him, and so he told her.

"Don't say that," pleaded the girl, timidly. "Clive, if you love me and my heart is yours why should this wretched money divide us?"

"Your father has a right to look for a richer son-in-law. It shall never be said I took advantage of his hospitality to deceive him."

"You cannot love me, Clive."

"I love you, darling? Ah, how much!"

"But you love your pride more. Clive, let us ask papa to give all his money to the Sheans—we should be happy without."

"I cannot rob you."

"Who talks of robbing?"

It was Mr. Smith's voice which interrupted them.

At his side stood Violet and Gerald, they had come to look for the trunks.

One glance and Evelyn felt relieved—she knew by their faces they had only just arrived. Her secret was still her own.

That night Mr. Smith and Clive Ernstone were closeted in the library. Very simply the lover told his tale; he had proposed to Evelyn, believing her what she seemed, an orphan companion—he had discovered she was an heiress.

"It was a foolish scheme of mine," admitted Mr. Smith, "but I didn't want my child married for her money. I'm sorry, Ernstone, very, but you see how impossible it would be."

"I am quite aware of its impossibility," coldly; "if I had known Evelyn to be an heiress I should never have spoken to her."

"I like you," said the old gentleman, simply. "What a pity it is you are not rich. Evelyn must marry money."

"I shall never be rich. I have only sought this interview to explain to you why I must cut my visit short. Of course I shall leave to-morrow early before the family are stirring."

"And you bear me ill-will. It's hard lines. I never thought of your fancying the child."

"I bear you no ill-will. You never thought the pain your scheme might cause. I believe it will cause grief to others beside me."

"Violet can take care of herself."

"But Gerald Shean?"

They parted friendly, and shook hands, the old man repeating again his regretful "If only you were rich," and Clive urging him to tell the truth to Gerald Shean at once.

As he went up the stairs a little white-robed figure came out of the drawing-room.

"You are going away, I can see it in your face. Won't you say good bye to me, Clive?"

"Don't tempt me, child."

She leant against him as though for support.

"Clive, I am only eighteen now, but in three years' time I shall be my own mistress."

"Your father holds out no hope, none."

"He is so kind he would not spoil my whole life."

"And would it spoil it?"

"I will only tell you this—if ever you come back you will find me waiting. Somehow I think your love will conquer your pride some day, Clive, and however long it is you will find me waiting."

And the next morning before breakfast time Clive Ernstone left the Court rejected.

## CHAPTER II.

### WAITING.

CLIVE ERNSTONE went back to Oxford. Outwardly he was but little changed, and no one suspected that one month of summer idling had left its bitter wound in his heart for all time; a little graver, a little quieter, but earnest and studious as ever, no one suspected the romance of Clive Ernstone's life.

Not even Gerald Shean, when some weeks later he too returned. He had a great deal to say to his friend, but he never once guessed the wound he was re-opening at every word, or the peculiar interest his listener had in the business he was pleased to speak of as "old Smith's fraud."

He had proposed to Violet in ignorance that she was not his cousin, and had been accepted by her in utter silence as to her true history, but he was too much in love to reproach her for this.

The people at home had cut up rusty, he informed Clive, but his uncle had offered to settle ten thousand pounds on Violet, and to give him a responsible post in his own large mercantile house, which had put things straight.

As he was going to be a business man he should leave Oxford at once, and the affair (his marriage) would probably come off before Christmas.

Clive listened kindly—Gerald must not be punished for his own misfortunes, and so he spared him a great deal of his time and attention, and never tried to change the subject when he talked of Elm Court and its inmates.

"And your real cousin?" asked Clive, when they were sitting in the twilight, where Gerald could not see his face, or he would never have ventured on the question.

"Oh, Evelyn and I are very good friends. She is a generous little creature; I believe the settling the ten thousand pounds on Violet is her doing."

"It is just like her."

"She is a nice little thing—not much to look at; she's very quiet and grave too, I fancy all this love business of ours has tired her out."

Clive wondered if there was another cause.

"My mother and Sir Henry went down to the Court to call upon their future daughter, and the governor declared I was an idiot not to guess the truth at once, for Evelyn was the image of her mother."

"But you didn't know her mother."

"Her picture hangs in the gallery. She was my father's favourite sister. I believe my mother is just as well pleased I'm not going to marry Evelyn, she was jealous of my aunt I think."

Gerald was not quick of perception, for he even invited Clive to be best man at his wedding, but the student had a good excuse ready—he was to start before the ceremony on a scientific mission to China.

"You might have waited a week," grumbled Gerald, "there's not another soul I care to ask."

"Do without one."

"Nonsense, I must be married in proper style; besides, what would the bridesmaids say?"

"Are there to be many?"

"Six. When shall you be back, Gerald?"

"I hardly know, it might be three years."

"Well, you'll find me a respectable family man by that time. I shall get old and steady very soon now I'm to have a responsible post in the concern."

It was as impossible to fancy Gerald a "family man" as to imagine him filling a responsible post anywhere. Clive gave up both attempts in despair.

"I'm sorry you're going," repeated Sir Henry's heir. "I tell you what, Clive, directly you come back you must come and look me up, we're to live at the Dower House on my father's place in Surrey, and I'm to go to business every morning as regular as clock-work."

"You seem to have settled everything."

"We have. Well, is it a bargain, when you do come back you're to come straight to us?"

"You'll have someone else to consult by that time, Gerald."

"I shall always be master in my own house," very loftily.

Having seen a great deal of Miss Violet Smith Clive doubted this, his opinion was that the grey mare would prove the better horse, but he kept his belief religiously to himself.

Very soon after that conversation he set sail for China on his mission, and as the sea rolled between him and his native land a little pain filled his heart for the irony of fate.

Why could not Violet have been the heiress instead of Evelyn?

Poor little Evelyn, he knew she loved him, but, alas! he could not tempt her to forsake the father whose only child she was. In time she might forget and he alone suffer through that romance enacted on Brighton Pier.

And she?

Three days afterwards she helped to dress Violet for her wedding, and as she saw the many inanimate objects which recalled Violet's bridegroom her thoughts would fly to the friend who had accompanied him on his first visit to the Court.

She had been told incidentally that Clive had gone abroad. Poor child! it seemed already years instead of months since he had left her.

"It will be easier for him," she sighed, "he can work—I have only to wait."

And so Violet's chief bridesmaid had a pensive look upon her beautiful face, and the scion of nobility who acted as best man made little way in intimacy with the heiress, and described her later on as "beautiful to look at, my dear boy, but just like a statue, couldn't get a word out of her."

And Lady Shean felt quite satisfied that Gerald had not married his cousin.

Daughters of her own were there. Viscountess Manners, a pretty blonde, who had married a widow of fifty, and become stepmother to six unruly children, and the Honourable Mrs. Lester, who had espoused a diplomatist.

Lady Shean's family had done well so far. These two married children had quite satisfied her views, and Gerald also.

There were two more girls, twins of seventeen, whom she hoped to marry before long, for she had a troop of younger ones shut up in the schoolroom at the Hall.

It was a pretty wedding. No expense was spared, and no one cried. The breakfast was sumptuous—the guests noble, the speeches eloquent, only when all was over and the last carriageful drove away John Smith turned to his daughter and noticed the pensive sadness of her face.

She had not looked thus four months ago—and how thin and fragile she was growing.

"I did it for the best, my dear," speaking in answer to that look upon her face, for she had said nothing.

"I am sure you did, papa."

"He was a fine fellow and I liked him, but you ought to marry money."

She answered nothing to that. She had quite resolved not to marry money unless the man who offered it to her was Clive Ernstone.

Mr. and Mrs. Shean returned from their honeymoon in due time and took up their abode in the Dower House. It was only twelve miles from London, and Gerald went daily to the City

and filled the responsible post very much to his own satisfaction.

His wife's money brought in over five hundred a year. He drew as much more as salary, so the young couple being rent free were very fairly well off.

Gerald was certainly very much in love with his wife, and if that young lady did gradually get the upper hand and become, as Clive Ernstone had fancied she would, the managing partner in the domestic firm, as she was certainly the more prudent and foreseeing of the pair, perhaps it was just as well for their temporal interests; and so affairs went on for two years.

Then came the crash that year—not yet so very far distant—so full of failures in the commercial world when firms that had been thought as safe as the Bank of England were ruined, and among them John Smith's.

There was nothing dishonourable in his fall—no human foresight could have averted it, it was due simply to the commercial depression of the time and the failure of many other firms with whom he had done business.

There was no disgrace attaching to him, but he could not bear up under the sense of failure. Within a week after his name appeared in the "Gazette" he died of that oldest and saddest of diseases—a broken heart.

And Evelyn?

There was nothing for her. Years ago—nay only one year ago—Mr. Smith could have settled thousands a year upon his child, but he died a bankrupt, and there was not so much as a ten-pound note for Evelyn.

The Sheans were her nearest relations. Sir Henry, who had loved her dead mother very dearly, would gladly have given her a home at the Hall—indeed he asserted loudly that Violet's fortune having been derived from John Smith they were doubly bound to provide for his daughter. But Sir Henry, like his son, was not master in his own house. Lady Shean had never taken to Evelyn, partly from the reason Gerald had alleged, partly because her beauty would make her a rival to the twins, tall, lanky girls of nearly twenty now, whom their mother found it well nigh impossible to establish in marriage. Her daughters were her first consideration, Lady Shean declared to her husband, and nothing would induce her to allow Evelyn Smith to live at the Hall.

Sir Henry next appealed to Gerald. The smash had not so very much affected his interests. He had slipped into a very comfortable position as private secretary. His hours were from twelve to three, and every second day seemed to be a holiday. But Gerald told his father promptly his duty was to his own wife. Violet's fortune had been given her unconditionally. He should not allow her to despoil herself.

Evelyn would gladly have settled the question of what was to be done with her by taking a situation as a governess, but for six months longer she would a minor, and Sir Henry, who was her guardian, absolutely refused to agree to such a step.

At last, partly to please her mother, of whom she was a little afraid, partly to rid herself of the trouble of perpetually changing governesses, Adela, Viscountess Manners, proposed that Evelyn should have the charge of her unmannerly brood of stepchildren. No one would know she had gone out if she came to them. They would give her a few pounds a year to buy her clothes, and of course she would be treated as a member of the family.

Lady Shean caught at the suggestion. Sir Henry showed but feeble opposition, and so within a month of her father's death the petted mistress of the Court found herself an inmate of Netherton Castle, her position a little beneath the lady's-maid, her labours harder than those of any menial in the house.

The viscountess had four stepdaughters, their ages ranging from twelve to eight, and she delivered them all over into Evelyn's care.

"Do what you like, only don't come to me with complaints."

Which, being interpreted, meant:

"They may worry you till you are weary, but I am on no account to be disturbed."

And Evelyn still thought of Clive Ernstone—still "waited" for his return. Oh, readers, there has been a great discussion lately about woman's work—believe me, woman's hardest work is waiting.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ACCEPTED.

THE scientific mission Clive Ernstone had started on was prolonged beyond his utmost expectations. He had said lightly to Gerald that it might be three years, but he had never seriously thought his absence would last so long. But it was so. Three summers had blossomed since his visit to the Court before he found himself free to return to England.

He had had very few letters from his native land. As he had told Evelyn long ago, he had no relations, and he was not a man to make many intimate friendships. He had cared for Gerald Shean perhaps more than any other companion, and there were many reasons to keep him from corresponding with Sir Henry's heir. So when, the morning before he sailed, he received six letters, he certainly had a right to feel very much surprised.

One was in a lawyer's hand. There was no mistaking the official style. He gave the preference to that.

"Sir,—We have the pleasure to inform you that by the will of the late lamented Alexis Wilfred Morgan, Esq., you become possessor of the estate in Sussex known as Ernstone Manor, with all the lands and revenues, furniture, and plate appertaining to the same.

"We should be glad to receive instructions from you at your earliest convenience.

"We are, Sir,

"Your obedient servants,  
"HILL AND DALE."

Strong man as he was, a mist seemed to come before Clive Ernstone's eyes. What, was the old home of his childhood really his once more? Now surely he might return and ask Evelyn at her father's hands.

He took up another letter. The name was in a crabbed hand, unfamiliar to him, but the address was evidently penned by Messrs. Hill and Dale's clerk.

"YOUNG MAN,—Years ago I resolved never to marry, and I believe I may do what I like with my own, as I have not a relative on the face of the earth. When you gave up your inheritance to satisfy your father's creditors I knew you were made of the right stuff, and I declared you should not go unrewarded. I was the chief mortgagee, and I easily secured the property. I think it has suffered nothing in my hands, and I leave it free and unencumbered to you and your heirs for ever as a tribute of an old man's respect for honesty, and hoping that when restored to the heritage of your fathers you will preserve the same course of uprightness as won the esteem of

"WILFRED MORGAN."

The other letters, one and all, were merely congratulations. The news that was so fresh to him was known widely in England. Amongst others, Lady Shean honoured him with a few lines urging Gerald's wish to see his old friend, and saying that he must be a visitor at the Hall, as well as the Dover House.

He sailed for England and went straight to Sussex. There at the lodge gates of the Court he paused. There had been no mention of Evelyn in Lady Shean's letter. What if she were dead!

"Is Mr. Smith at home?" he asked of a servant in reply.

"He's been dead nearly a year, sir," impressed by Clive's eagerness. "He died a week after the firm failed."

"Failed?"

"You're a stranger, or you'd have heard of it, sir. It made a rare commotion in these parts. He failed right enough, poor gentleman, though through no fault of his."

"And his daughter?"

"Lady Shean took her away. They were relations, I think I've heard say."

To Lady Shean Clive repaired, and eagerly demanded news of Evelyn. Her ladyship, who thought the master of Ernstone just suited to make one of her twins happy, replied without hesitation that she did not know anything of Miss Smith's whereabouts. Clive believed the falsehood, but it had a different effect to what my lady had intended. Her visitor left the Hall within the hour without even shaking Gerald's hand. For him the world held but one object now, to search for Evelyn.

To more than one private inquiry office did he go, but in vain. Had it been any other name they might have succeeded better, the people told him, but to find Miss Smith seemed beyond their efforts.

He never tired of seeking her. More than once he crossed the channel, tempted by some description of a Miss Smith, who resembled Evelyn, but only to be disappointed at last.

When almost a year had passed, and he could gain no clue to her, he almost despaired.

He was at Brighton the fourth anniversary of that day which had been so full of moment to them, and he could not resist visiting the Chain Pier.

How little everything was changed. He sat on the same spot where he had told her his love story, only she was gone. If alive he felt sure she was true to him. Could it be that she was dead?

A child's voice fell on his ear.

"I can't think why you come here, Miss Smith. There's no one to see. Why can't you go on the West Pier where the band is?"

"You generally do, Ethel," came the answer, in a voice which made Clive start. "But to-day I wanted to come here. It was a fancy of mine."

"I wish you wouldn't take fancies, you've no right to, you are only a governess if you are mamma's cousin."

"We had better be going," said the young governess, wearily. "It is a long way to Sussex Square, and Lady Manners may be anxious."

"Mamma is never anxious."

He had hard work to control his impatience, but he would not accost her then. He went that same afternoon to Sussex Square. The visitors' list of course gave the number where the Viscountess Manners was staying. He sent in his card boldly and asked for the viscount.

Lord Manners was a good-natured man; had he been consulted Evelyn's lot would not have been made a hard one. He simply left everything domestic to his wife, only when Ernstone of Ernstone came to him, the richest commoner in Sussex, he did not consult my lady as to whether he should receive him.

He listened to the story with interest. "Adela must look out for another governess," he said, when Clive had finished. "I suppose you'll want to be married soon. I'll give Evelyn away. I always liked her, and I don't believe, between ourselves, she has been over and above happy here."

Neither did Clive.

"I'll send her to you," returned the viscount. "Adela's out. Will you stay to dinner?"

But Clive refused.

"Here, Miss Smith," cried Lord Manners, putting his head into the schoolroom. "Will you be good enough to step into the library? There's a piece of business for you there, I think."

A minute later she was in Clive's arms.

We will not chronicle what he said to her or how she answered him. Of course he told her of his long search, and she confided to him how Lady Shean had said he would marry Jane (one of the twins), but she had never believed it—never.

In less than a month they were married, but they did not go for a regular honeymoon. They stayed at Brighton, and often walked on the Chain Pier.

And now Clive is master of Ernstone, and Evelyn is its idolized mistress, and they are very happy—happier, perhaps, for the time of waiting, which seemed so painful to them, and

as I chronicle their history Evelyn bends over my shoulder and whispers that I am to add she has never once regretted the Romance of Brighton Pier.

## RUBY RAYLAND.

THE well-dressed multitude moved slowly up the aisles of the dim church, with its costly architecture.

And among them, under the wing of her city-bred cousin, Ruby Rayland walked along half-timidly, and felt glad when she was safely ensconced in one corner of the family pew, which was in a conspicuous place, not far from the reading-desk.

In a few moments the Rev. Mr. Howe stepped into view from a side vestry, in flowing white vestments, that lent a certain ideal grace to his rather massive but well-proportioned form.

More than one feminine heart fluttered quickly as bright eyes looked upon his fine, genial face, for the popular city preacher was a bachelor, though, it was hoped, not a confirmed one.

The deep-toned organ sounded, and the choir in the gallery burst forth in a glad Easter anthem.

The music rolled melodiously upward, and died in the dim arches and vaulted roof.

Ruby sat beside her Cousin Maude, motionless but with little thrills of delight stealing along her nerves.

Could it be possible that she was at last in the city to which she had looked forward so eagerly for the last six months, actually sitting in Mr. Howe's church?

She had so longed to see him, had heard so much of his fame. She had read his sermons in the papers that came to her village home among the Hampshire hills, and they had seemed to her like grand poems; not the least bit like the dry, prosaic discourses to which she had listened from childhood from Parson Smith, who was really good and true in heart and life, but dreadfully commonplace in his ideas.

How noble this hero of hers looked. How high above her he seemed. How to be even sitting so near him made her feel of some more importance in the world. She thought how delighted her particular friend, Bertha Moore, would feel to be in her shoes, for Bertha was a hero-worshiper like herself. Her eyes grew brighter and her cheeks flushed softly with her happy thoughts.

The morning service ended, the silver plates were passed around for Easter offerings, the announcements made, and then Mr. Howe launched upon the full tide of an eloquent discourse. What a grand, deep, thrilling voice he had! Ruby's heart bounded still more gladly. To read his sermons was to lose one-half of the pleasure. What a delightful thing it must be to hear him every Sunday.

She glanced sideways at her Cousin Maude. She did not look at all enthusiastic, Ruby thought, while she felt like clapping her hands with delight.

She was the daughter of the village doctor in Ashdale, and had had from childhood the keenest relish for books and all intellectual pleasures. She had ransacked among her father's old college books, and pored over them; had read Shakespeare until she was familiar with nearly every passage; had attended the course of lectures held every winter in the Ashdale Hall, all of which had fostered a desire for a freer, broader life in the great world without. So when her aunt, Mrs. Bentley, who had spent the hot summer days in the retirement of Ashdale, invited her to come next winter and have a taste of city life, Ruby's delight knew no bounds, and not the least of her gladness was that she should see Mr. Howe, whose fame was on every tongue, and also hear him speak.

She had brought with her quite a sum of money which she had carefully hoarded, and her Cousin Maude had insisted her to lay some of it out

to make herself presentable. And where she put on the stylish hat and warm, fur-trimmed cloak, and buttoned the soft, delicately-tinted kid upon her shapely, dimpled hands, Maude thought what a pretty little creature her country cousin really was.

The minister, looking in the direction of the Bentley pew, where Maude sat erect in her fair, ladylike stateliness, with a soft white plume dropping lightly over the golden hair above her white brow, noted the little white rose in her shadow, and wondered whose was the new face so pure and sweet in the "dim, religious light." And even in the midst of the eloquent discourse whose thoughts thrilled the hearts of his listeners as they came warm and ardent from his own, he thought how much she looked like his little sister, Mabel, who was now sleeping under the daisies in the obscure nook that had been the home of his boyhood.

"How did you enjoy hearing Mr. Howe?" her aunt asked, kindly, on her return from church.

"Oh, so much, aunt! And the music was delightful; I never enjoyed myself so much in my life."

And her flushed cheeks and shining eyes bore witness to the truth of her answer. You see she was an enthusiastic, impressionable little thing, and, to her yearning mind, the day had been a rare delight. Maude looked at her with a quiet smile hovering around her mouth; she was evidently not one of the enthusiastic kind.

A few days afterwards Mr. Howe dropped in at Mrs. Bentley's. He was in the habit of calling there every day, in an unconventional sort of way. Mrs. Bentley's oldest daughter, a sweet-faced, youthful widow, had come to spend a few weeks with her mother, and had just arrived. She had with her a lovely, violet-eyed little daughter of three summers, who in time would be the exact counterpart of her Aunt Maude. The lady and Mr. Howe were old acquaintances.

"You must come upstairs and see my darling," she said, when he arose to depart, after a pleasant little chat with the ladies in the parlour. "I would bring her down, only I think a child retains its artlessness longer if it is not held up for inspection, or made aware that it is the object of notice."

They went upstairs together, and Mrs. Wentworth opened the door of the pretty room which had been converted into a nursery. The little nursery-maid was not to be seen, but on the carpet, which was strewn with playthings, sat Ruby in careless, girlish abandonment, her brown hair all unbound and hanging loosely about her face. And among the luxuriant tresses the little child was running riot, and "making believe" to comb it out fair and smooth. But she only succeeded in making it tangle still more, and, when the door opened, the two were laughing in concert.

Ruby saw who was with Mrs. Wentworth through the straggling locks that the child had combed over her face, and felt dreadfully ashamed that the dignified minister should see her in such a plight.

"Why, Ruby?" the lady said, in accents of surprise, as they came forward. "Where is Jennie?"

"She asked to go out a little while on an errand, and I told her I would take care of Blanche," Ruby said, shaking back the locks from her burning face, and disclosing to the clergyman's view the sweet face he had noticed on Sunday.

He did not seem a bit dignified or terrible, she thought, as the lady said:

"Mr. Howe, this is our Cousin Ruby, Miss Rayland."

He stooped to where she sat. She hadn't the presence of mind to rise, and her little hand lay a moment in his broad, white palm, and she felt half-confused and half-pleased, and her heart fluttered so that she could hardly breathe.

Mr. Howe sat down, and, taking Blanche upon his knee, began to talk to her in pleasant fashion, and Ruby was glad of a chance to get up and run out of the room, to arrange her dishevelled locks and to hide her confusion.

Mrs. Wentworth talked in her pleasant, lady-

like manner, and Mr. Howe remarked that the child would in time be the exact counterpart of her Aunt Maude. But when he took his leave and went back to his snug quarters his thoughts reverted to the sweet-faced girl they called Miss Rayland, and again he thought how much she seemed like his little lost sister Mabel.

The next Sunday, as Ruby sat in church her cheeks fairly burned with the recollection of the nursery scene, and she didn't dare to lift her eyes to the speaker's face until half the service was over.

The bright, crisp winter days went by, each filled with some new pleasure to our little Ruby. She attended many concerts, where prima donnas warbled strains of richest melody; went to see the impersonations of Shakespeare's heroes and heroines, over whose deeds she had dreamed for years; visited art galleries and libraries and other places of absorbing interest to her; and with the enlargement of her horizon began to feel a larger life throbbing in her veins. Her letters to her parents and to Bertha Moore were full of glowing accounts of her enjoyment and of the extreme kindness of her aunt and cousins.

She had not been an inmate of the Bentleys' luxurious home very long before she began to remark the frequent, informal visits of Mr. Howe, and to understand vaguely that he was supposed to be interested in Maude.

She thought sometimes, when she looked at her beautiful, stately cousin, what a handsome couple they would make.

"If they could only be married while I am here, and I could be one of the bridesmaids," she thought, her eyes brightening with the possibility of the honour which would immortalise her at home. "But she wouldn't have poor little simple me for bridesmaid," she reflected. "I should be sure to make some blunder."

She liked her Cousin Maude, but she was a little afraid of her.

She was always kind to her, but never let her come near her, never caressed her or called her pet names, as her aunt and Mrs. Wentworth sometimes did.

She had the same quiet, distant way with all the family.

But one day Ruby, who was in the parlour when Mr. Howe was announced, noted the delicate rose-tint in her cousin's cheek deepen considerably, although there was no change in the calm stateliness of her manner when he entered. Ruby wondered if she ever cried, or laughed, or got excited through and through, like she did.

"But then she's older than I am"—Maude was twenty-five—"and has got over all such foolish, girlish ways. I wonder if I shall be like her in, let me see, seven years; that will make me as old as she is. But I don't believe I want to ever be so distant and stately, though I should like to be as beautiful."

Whenever Mr. Howe met Ruby he spoke kindly and pleasantly to her, and the awe with which she had at first regarded him was superseded by a sort of reverential love, as she felt the warm outgoings of his kind, genial heart, which no amount of worldly popularity could freeze.

But a cloud was gathering. Toward spring a terrible epidemic broke out in the city, and raged with pitiless fury among the poorer class who were the objects of a benevolent society connected with Mr. Howe's church. It did not spare the richer ones, but did its fearful work in many beautiful homes.

Mr. Howe went everywhere among the sick and dying, his great heart brimful of love and pity, like the Master whom he served. Many a dying eye closed peacefully, and upon many a dead face a sweet smile hovered, brought there by the tender words of comfort from his lips.

Many a sorrowing heart was comforted by him, for to all he was an angel of sympathy.

Maude and Ruby, following where he led, had been busy all the time, and had ministered to the wants of many. And they had been spared. The worst was over, and still the shadow of sickness or death had not fallen upon

the Bentley mansion. All breathed freer. Mr. Howe had seemed to bear a charmed life.

Late one afternoon he dropped into Mrs. Bentley's for a short call. He had not been there for quite a long time.

"My dear Mr. Howe!" Mrs. Bentley exclaimed. "Are you not nearly worn out?"

"I am rather tired, but I think rest will bring me all right in a few days," he said, with a very faint smile.

Soon Maude entered and gave him her hand in her own stately fashion; then Ruby, who reached out hers impulsively, and they all sat down and discussed the scenes through which they had so recently passed.

"I—I feel rather strange," Mr. Howe said, at length, passing his hand over his brow, "a sort of dizziness."

Mrs. Bentley hastened to give him a glass of wine.

"I shall be better now, I think. Thank you," he said, making an attempt to smile as he handed back the glass.

But he did not feel better, and Mrs. Bentley prevailed upon him to lie down a while, and conducted him to a pleasant chamber.

In a short time it was evident that he showed symptoms of the dreadful disease that had laid low so many, and a physician was called in haste, who looked upon him gravely, but prepared medicines and left them with special directions. The next time he called the patient was delirious. The disease had seized upon his strong frame, and the man of science shook his head and declared that it would be a close encounter with the great vanquisher.

For weeks he tossed on his pillow, and raved in wild delirium. He had the most faithful, tender nursing and incessant care that love could bestow, and the hearts of the people, which were knit to his in closest sympathy, uttered fervent prayers for his recovery.

Mrs. Bentley and Maude were indefatigable in their care. It seemed strange but he would call piteously for Ruby; and when she stood beside him, and laid her cold, soft hand on his fevered brow, the wandering soul seemed to recognise her presence, and he would grow calm. Somehow Maude's touch seemed to make him more restless, and then she would stand back as stately as ever, but hurt inwardly, and give place to Ruby.

For days his life hung in the balance; the slightest breath might turn the scales in the wrong direction. Then the crisis was past, and he opened his eyes with the old expression in their dark depths, and fixed them upon Mrs. Bentley's face as she stood by his bed. The doctor came forward.

"He will revive now," he said, softly, and Maude and Ruby, listening in the next room for his verdict, heard the joyful words.

"Where is Ruby? I thought she was here," the sick man said, faintly; and Ruby came and placed her hand lightly on his forehead, when he heaved a deep sigh of content, and sank into slumber.

The joyful news was spread around, and many a fervent "Thank God!" was uttered by hearts filled with gratitude.

But Maude, hearing that his first sane words were for Ruby, went to her room and indulged in a fit of violent weeping, then dried her eyes, and reappeared as impassive as ever.

During the first days of his convalescence, when he was too weak to raise a finger, he would have no other nurse but Ruby, and she, only too glad to know that she was necessary to him, would wonder, sometimes, if she was not really dreaming, or if this weak invalid dependent upon her for the slightest attention was really the great Mr. Howe, whom she had idealized in her village home.

As he grew stronger he began to show more desire for the society of Maude and Mrs. Wentworth, and the former gratified him, with a sort of constraint, new to her. He had never showed her any particular attention, but he had made up his mind that among all the ladies of his acquaintance she was the one he most desired for a wife.

He had not been very enthusiastic about it,

but they were building him a rectory, and he was expected to marry—and, well—a man of thirty-six ought to be married if he ever intended to be. So he asked less and less for Ruby, and discussed literature and art with Maude, who was very well informed on all such subjects.

Late one afternoon—he expected to be moved to his bachelor quarters in a few days—they were seated together in a small private parlour, talking over the poets.

"I shall ask her to marry me when I am fully recovered," was floating in the undercurrent of his thoughts; but his manner toward Maude was not much like that of a lover.

Ruby, not knowing they were in the room, pushed open the door quickly, but at sight of them a quick flush overspread her face, and with a hurried "I beg your pardon!" she closed the door again.

The flash of sudden interest that leaped into his face did not escape the notice of Maude. Her eyes had been opening for some time. Had she ever called up such a look as that in that fine, noble face? She thought not. She resolved to sift the matter at once. He had shown a preference for Ruby in the delirium of fever and the weakness of his convalescence. Did that preference still exist?

"Ruby is looking rather pale lately," she said. "She will need the air of her native hills before she is herself again, I am afraid."

"I have thought so myself," he said, in a constrained tone and a change of manner which Maude, watching him quietly, noticed. "I—I am afraid it was hard on her while I was ill. No doubt I was selfish—sick people sometimes are," he said, with a queer smile.

"You used to call for her nearly all the time when she was not beside you," Maude said, with her blue eyes on his face, ignoring his last words.

A high colour as vivid as the fever flush came over his face; he could not meet her eyes steadily. Her womanly instincts were swift and true.

"You love her, Mr. Howe!" she said, in a half-whisper.

He started, looked confused and abashed. The man who could sway thousands at will by his intellectual gifts, was the wisest uninitiated boy in love affairs.

"I—I—" he stammered. "What will you think of me, Miss Bentley? I have been intending to ask you to be my wife."

"I am not the one to make you happy," she said. "She could fill your heart. I could not. I should be proud to be your wife, but neither you nor I could be happy in such a union."

He caught her white, jewelled hand, and pressed it reverently to his lips.

"I respect you so highly, and thought I loved you—until lately that child has somehow crept into my heart. She always reminded me of my dead sister Mabel. But I shall always remember you as a queen among women."

A faint colour stole into her creamy cheeks, from which the blood had receded with the effort she had made to be noble and unselfish.

"Let me send her to you," she said, glad to escape, and she walked out of the room, her silken skirts trailing on the rich carpet.

The big, child-like heart of the man she left behind throbbed with strange emotions.

"Mr. Howe wishes to see you, Ruby."

She looked up, half-frightened, the ready blush mounting to her cheeks. There was something in Maude's manner that she did not understand. The latter took her hand and led her to the door of the parlour. She went in half hesitatingly.

"My cousin said you wanted to see me," she said, doubtfully.

"Come here," he said, reaching out both hands towards her.

She advanced slowly.

"Ruby!"

The rich voice was soft and low, and the tender intonation set Ruby's heart throbbing furiously. A strange, half-giddy, half-delirious feeling stole over her as he drew her down into a seat beside him.

"I love you, Ruby!"

Surely, never in love's history had heart beat with such a tumultuous throbbing as did Ruby's. She was sure now that she had been dreaming all the time, and the waking-up time would come now in a few moments.

"Will you be my little wife, Ruby?"

And she, completely overcome by this time, laid her head upon his arm and cried with overcharged feelings.

"What! crying? Are you sorry that I love you?" he said, lifting her sweet, blushing face so that he could look into her eyes.

"No, no! But it is all so strange—so unexpected—so sweet!" she said.

And so Mr. Howe, the popular city lion, won a little wild rose for his bride. And people wondered at his choice. But his heart was secure with his treasure, and he did not care for criticism.

Ruby's aunt and cousin congratulated her. After all she was of their own blood, and, though country bred, a true lady in thought and action. She developed into a noble, self-sustaining woman, a fit helper for her husband, and the people loved her as they could never have loved her Cousin Maude.

Ruby's parents were proud and happy at the result of her visit to the city. "But I always knew she was fit to marry the best in the land," her father said, with fond pride.

Bertha Moore visits her in her city home, and goes back, proud to tell of her friend, Mrs. Howe. And Ruby, a happy, honoured wife, often thinks of the time when she dreamed of the distinction of being even the bridesmaid of Mrs. Howe! I. I.

#### SEA-COAST SUPERSTITIONS.

Our wives by the sea-coast hold many superstitions concerning the "hallow-sounding and mysterious main." Thus, Dickens tells us that Barlow lingered in his dying until the turn of the tide, when, the tide going out, Barlow went out with it. In New England it is unlucky to kill a pig in the wane of the moon or at the ebbing of the tide; the pork will shrink in the boiling. Water in the dinner-pot evaporates more rapidly over the fire when the tide is "dead low." It is unlucky to eat fish from the head downward; it drives away the fish from the shores. To tell the stage of the tide without going to the beach, look in a cat's eyes; the pupil of every intelligent cat's eye is elongated when the tide is at the flood. Never count a catch of fish until the day's work or sport is done, otherwise the sport is spoiled. Similarly, the farmer never counts his lambs until the season for their dropping is over.

But it is not alone in rural communities that men and women keep up customs and rites founded on Pagan superstitions. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans it was a common custom for the bridegroom to give his bride, on the wedding-day, a considerable sum of money, by way of purchase of herself. From this old usage, no doubt, we have derived the custom of making wedding presents under which so many people groan. The ancient Saxons gave a betrothal ring, or other gift, which was called a "wed," and from which we have derived a very charming word. Fifth Avenue throws an old shoe after the departing bride. Is this because sterner forefathers ordained that the bridegroom should tap his new-made wife on the head with his shoe as a token of submission to her lord?

Krupp, of Essen, the great German gun-maker, has stirred the bile of the members of the Iron and Steel Institute by his refusal to allow them to visit his works. Considering that much of his success has been achieved by the English "workmen" in his employ, and that these gentlemen, whether members of the Institute or not, are never refused permission to visit works in this country, Krupp's treatment of the Institute is shabby in the extreme.



[PARTING WORDS.]

## EDITH'S ERROR.

An uneasy expression came into Edith Moreton's face as she read, and she let the book drop into her lap.

"Whatever dims thy sense of truth," she softly repeated, while her troubled gaze went wandering out over the green fields, thickly starred with buttercup and daisy.

The summer breeze gently swayed the lace curtains at the open window; the canary sang his little, monotonous song over and over; the kitten lay curled in a square of golden sunshine, beauty and harmony environed the young lady, who herself completed the picture.

Seated in a low easy-chair before the window, with fair face and graceful figure, she looked the embodiment of peace and sweet content. A cool-looking dress of neutral-tinted muslin, trimmed and ruffled to the extremest demand of fashion, a heavy-hearted, velvety white rose nestled among the laces on her bosom and another in the crisp waves of her hair, adorned with peculiar fitness the beauty of the delicate yet spirited face that was turned toward the open window with a wistful sadness in the large blue eyes.

One elbow rested on the arm of the chair, the hand supporting a blue and gold volume that the young lady had been perusing with interest.

The open sleeve had fallen back, displaying an

arm round, firm and snowy white, with distracting little dimples at the exquisitely turned wrists.

On the first finger of the same hand glittered, with restless scintillation, a diamond ring, and on this ring the young lady's eyes finally settled, with the troubled look deepening in them.

"What else could I do?" she said, softly, while she turned the ring round and round on her slender finger with a nervous motion. "He was so abrupt and impetuous, and I did not want to offend him; they would have been so angry if I had. I did not mean to accept him, really, only to temper my refusal; but he was so decided that it must be yes or no. Is it possible that I said yes, and let him put this ring on my finger? Oh, how I despise myself! And now Mary and Lawrence are so delighted, and so determined that the only course before me is to write to Rufus and give him back his promise, because another has bidden higher for me. Poor Rufus! what would not he give me if he could? He thinks a palace the only fitting residence for me, and I must reward his love and trust by breaking his heart. I can't and I won't! Mary," she said, aloud, and speaking with excitement as a lady entered the room, "I cannot write to Rufus—indeed, indeed I cannot!" looking pleadingly into the other's face.

Disappointment and vexation were thereon depicted.

"Very well," responded Mary, otherwise Mrs. Grover, icily; "suit yourself by all means. But may I ask how you intend to extricate yourself

from your peculiar situation? If you cannot write to Rufus, you must give Mr. Atherton back his ring, and what will you tell him? That you only took it to see how it would seem to be engaged to two men at once? I must say," she added, with some heat, "that you have made a pretty mess of it."

A pause.

Mrs. Grover walked to her work-stand, and, selecting some bright-coloured worsteds, began stitching nervously, watching Edith meanwhile very stealthily.

To her sister's accusation Edith had returned neither yea nor nay.

She perfectly agreed with her; she had made a mess of it.

But was she wholly to blame?

She liked peace, and she liked to please people, and especially she liked to please her sister and her sister's husband, who had always been so kind to her.

The only home she had ever had was with them; she had come to her sister's house when she left boarding-school, and had been warmly welcomed there.

Mrs. Grover, who had not seen her younger sister for three years, was surprised when a young lady, pretty, accomplished, and dressed like a fashion-plate, presented herself with her luggage one evening on her doorstep. It is true that she had expected her, and knew that as a child she had been sufficiently pretty; but her beauty came upon her like a new revelation, and she at once resolved that Edith must marry well; position and wealth must be given in exchange for so much beauty and style.

This had been three years previous. Disappointment, therefore, was a feeble word to use for Mrs. Grover's lacerated feelings when, a year or so after Edith had taken up her abode with them, it came about that she had engaged herself to a young man without money, position, or influential friends—a young man standing wholly alone, yet hopeful, strong, and self-reliant.

After a while Mrs. Grover and her husband had given a vexed consent to their engagement, and Rufus Campbell had gone to London, where he knew there was a good chance for enterprise and thrift. Mrs. Grover hoped that time and absence would eradicate his image from Edith's heart, and that by good generalship she might yet see her suitably married. By being suitably married she meant easy carriages and high-stepping horses; dinner parties and diamonds, together with all the other et ceteras that go to making pleasurable the lives of that delectable part of humanity called the "upper ten." Mrs. Grover had neither carriages nor diamonds, but she saw no reason why Edith should not have them, provided she was willing to accept the goods the gods provide. For right here in their midst, as time passed, there came a gentleman endowed with all the good things aforesaid. His name was Harry Atherton. He had bought a large place in the locality known as Woodbine Lodge, as it was more generally called. This place had been renovated at great expense, and was now a shining light in the county.

From the first Mr. Atherton had admired Edith; her gentle efforts to discourage him had only added to her charm in his eyes; report had long since given them to each other; and Mrs. Grover had planned and waited as one not without hope, and now her hope and patience seemed about to be rewarded, for only yesterday Mr. Atherton had asked Edith to share with him his big house and his ten or twelve thousand per annum.

And Edith had, somehow, in trying to say no tenderly—trying to say no and still keep him her friend—had her answer construed into yes, and afterward she had not the heart to explain, to tell this man, who seemed so delighted to bestow on her all the goodly things in his possession, that he had mistaken her, to pull off the sparkling ring he had already put on her finger and tell him distinctly that she had long ago promised to marry another. You see Edith Moreton's great weakness lay in a certain indecision of character; this, and her desire to please

others, had now involved her in this "peculiar situation," as Mrs. Grover tersely called it.

After some time, Mrs. Grover having watched Edith's saddened face and grown sorry for her hasty words, spoke again, in a kindly voice:

"Edith, be reasonable; I believe from my heart that you like Harris Atherton quite as well as you do Rufus Campbell; and I should think that writing to Rufus to tell him that you have changed your mind would be easier than to tell a man like Mr. Atherton that you were already engaged to another when he asked you to marry him."

Edith winced visibly, but after a few minutes made answer:

"Mr. Atherton is rich and prosperous, and surrounded by friends; Rufus is poor, and you are all against him; he has only his trust in me. Shall I rob him of even that?" And she fixed her questioning eyes on her sister's face, while a pink flush came into her cheeks and made her fairer still. Mrs. Grover answered, coldly:

"You will do as you choose, of course."

After a little pause she added:

"Do you expect Rufus back at any definite period, Edith?"

Edith only replied by a despondent shake of the head.

"Then it will most likely be some years before he is in a position to marry," Mrs. Grover said, reflectively, as though pursuing a train of thought. "You have waited two years already; you must be a patient woman, or else very much in love."

Edith started as Mrs. Grover made these remarks, and the pink flush gradually deepened to an unbecoming crimson.

"What does Mary mean?" she said to herself.

"Are they tired of me? Is that why they are so anxious I should marry Mr. Atherton? They have always been so kind; ought I to marry Mr. Atherton, since their hearts seem so set on it?"

Here Mrs. Grover broke in again.

"Edith," she said, kindly and anxiously, "will you promise not to do anything one way or the other till Lawrence comes back? He will be home by Saturday, certainly. Let everything go on as it is till then. Surely that is not asking much of you."

"I promise," said Edith, glad that she could do so, since her sister had asked her; glad, perhaps, too, at having so good an excuse for putting off the evil hour of getting rid of one of her lovers.

Then Mrs. Grover left the room and Edith to her own reflections. Her thoughts were not sweet ones; bitter, rather, and self-accusing; but, such as they were, they were soon interrupted.

At first there was the sound of approaching voices—shrill, childish voices and sweet, childish laughter; and soon there burst into the room a sturdy boy of ten or eleven, followed by two girls a little younger. Meditation was perforce at an end.

"Auntie Edith! Auntie Edith! What is a white lie? Please tell me!"

"A white lie? What do you mean, child?" replied Aunt Edith.

"Why," said Flora, the youngest girl, explanatorily, fixing great, eager eyes on Edith's face, "Eddie told May and me to go down by Maine's grocery and wait awhile, and we would hear the loveliest hand-organ, and we went and waited and waited, till we were so tired and thirsty, and there was no organ at all; and Eddie says it was only a white lie, and a white lie is no harm."

"He only told us to go down to Maine's grocery to get us out of the way," broke in May, indignantly, "while he played with a lot of bad boys; and I shall tell mamma," added the young lady, with great dignity.

Eddie looked very shamefaced, but he spoke up valiantly.

"I only said that maybe the man with the organ would be at the corner grocery; and I thought maybe he would. I have seen him there twice lately. How was I to know that two great girls like you would stand there a couple

of hours waiting for him?" he finished, reproachfully apostrophising his sisters.

"He is a naughty boy to tell stories, is he not, auntie?"

"It was more than a white lie, wasn't it?"

"My dear little innocents," said Miss Moreton, rising and preparing to take herself off, "I must refer you to your mamma to settle the disputed question, and here she is now," as that lady entered.

Five minutes later Edith Moreton was sauntering slowly down a narrow lane, with a high, broad fence on one side and rows of giant willows on the other; the willows made a pleasant shade now that the sun was well into the western sky.

The lane led to a deep, narrow stream, taking its sluggish way between high banks, and here Edith paused in her saunter.

The foolish words of the children repeated themselves over and over in her mind.

"A white lie," she was saying to herself, with eyes fixed on the black water. "A lie which is half the truth is ever the blackest of lies. Well, my lie was not half the truth, so I suppose it is several shades lighter in colour on account of being a total one; although I'm afraid it was not quite white."

Presently she became conscious of something moving through the tall grass, and as she turned with a little, frightened start there bounded to her side a great shaggy brown dog. Instinctively she looked around for the dog's master, though she was not by any means anxious to see him; for she and the dog were old friends, and his master was Mr. Atherton. Oh, if she could only get away without his seeing her! But the wish was quite hopeless, for he had already seen her, and was making his way quickly towards her.

"I really thought you were going to cut me and run away," he said, as, having reached the spot where she stood, "in act to fly," he took both hands in his with an air of resolute possession very trying to Edith's "peculiar situation." "Confess that you were going to pretend not to see me," he went on, with laughing eyes fixed on her face.

He had expected her to deny it indignantly, but instead she answered never a word, and turned her eyes persistently away, while she grew "deeply, darkly, beautifully red." A look of disappointment and uneasy surprise overspread his face, and he loosened her hands.

"Do I annoy you in any way? Had you rather I would go?" he asked, a little constrainedly.

"I—oh, no—that is—of course—just as you choose!" replied Edith, lucidly.

The look of pained surprise did not leave the young man's face; and after a moment's hesitation he placed himself at her side as, with some murmured remarks about home, she began to retrace her steps. They paced silently along over the sunlit sward; the sweet trill of a bird floated down to them from the leafy branches of his "green and beautiful palace hall," the big shaggy dog trotted demurely ahead; the silence was growing oppressive. Edith felt that something must be said.

"What fine weather we are having," she remarked, brilliantly.

"Very fine," was the laconic response.

Another silence. A prolonged shriek, sharp and ringing, out the clear air. The evening train would soon be in. Presently it came thundering past; great volumes of blue smoke rolled against the blue sky, and breaking off into fantastic shapes floated away and disappeared. Suddenly Edith was aware that Mr. Atherton was close beside her, with searching eyes fixed on her face.

"Edith," he said, speaking very gently, "what is wrong? Are you sorry for the answer you gave me yesterday?"

Edith looked up with a gasp: here was a chance such as she never expected to have, a chance to retrieve that unfortunate mistake; why, oh, why did she give that idiotic promise to Mary?

"If you do not like me as well as you thought you did," pursued the young man, with a sort

of a choke in his voice, "for God's sake tell me so!"

Edith's heart gave her a compunctious stab; she glanced quickly up at his whitening face, the pain she saw there was too much for her.

"Oh, I do like you!" she cried, reaching a friendly hand out to him; and as she spoke there came a rushing sound as Master Eddie, in hot pursuit of the dog, precipitated himself upon the scene. They were quite at the gate now, and the young man said, smiling broadly in his relief:

"You shall tell me this evening what was the matter; you frightened me so horribly, I was sure you were about to jilt me."

He took his departure, never dreaming how near he came to the truth in that last remark of his.

It was two days later. The returned Mr. Grover stood waiting in the hall—being a man, he was waiting very impatiently.

He was in a mackintosh, and held an umbrella in his hand.

Outside the rain poured steadily down, inside there was the whoop of playful children, at present subdued by the knowledge of their sire's presence in the house, but destined to break forth in full blast as soon as he was gone.

Perhaps it was the head-splitting noise which she knew to be in store for her to-day—the children being debarred by the rain from exercising their lungs out of doors—or perhaps it was the down-heartedness engendered by the gloomy sky weeping plentiful tears, the silent birds and drowned flowers, that had drawn an answering gloom on Edith's face.

She came down the stairs and gave her brother-in-law a sealed envelope on which was written the address of Rufus Campbell.

Mr. Grover placed the letter in his pocket and went.

He and Mrs. Grover had their will. Mrs. Grover's entreaties and Mr. Grover's cutting sneers had prevailed. Edith had written to Rufus Campbell—had told him that she could not fulfil her engagement. She did it with tears and bitter self-contempt, but still she did it.

Now, surely, they would leave her alone—now she might enjoy such peace as her conscience allowed her.

She shut herself in her room and watched the pouring rain, the wind-lashed boughs of the willow, and felt glad that it was not a pleasant day. She could not bear the jubilant gladness of sunshine and singing birds and blossoming flowers to-day.

There came the patter of childish feet on the stairs, and a voice called at her door:

"Please, Auntie Edith, mother says come down. Mr. Atherton is here."

Edith rose reluctantly and went down. Mr. Atherton was alone in the room, walking up and down; he stopped as he entered, but did not come toward her, nor did he give her greeting of any sort. Edith's surprised eyes fastened upon his face—what was it she saw there? Anger and pain had changed his handsome, genial face almost beyond her knowing. There was a cold, hard look in his gaze that she could not meet, and she turned her eyes uneasily away. Then he spoke:

"I have heard a strange thing, and I have come to you for confirmation or—what I pray God you may be able to give—a true denial of it."

He paused, and for the space of a dozen heartbeats they looked into each other's eyes.

"I have been told," he continued, with deliberate slowness, evidently keeping a strong control over himself and his eyes devouring her face while he spoke, "that for the last two years you have been engaged to Rufus Campbell—is it true?"

Edith's pale face was still paler, and her heart beat so furiously that it was with an effort that she said, speaking in an altered voice, but still quite steadily:

"Yes."

At this brief answer, that rang the knell

of his dearest hopes, he turned aside his face, that none might see what was written thereon. For a minute or two he stood with clenched hands, while lost love and bitter anger and black despair battled to the death in his tempest-tossed soul. Then, without a word, he turned to go. But at the door he stopped, hesitated an instant, then came back.

"During these last two years," he said, in a low tone of concentrated anger, "and especially during this last year, when you knew I was learning to love you, when I was thinking you so true, so pure, so infinitely above all other women I had ever known that you seemed little less than an angel to me—all this time you were engaged to that man, who, trusting you entirely, was bravely trying to fight his way to fortune for you; and you"—with infinite scorn—"you coolly threw him over as soon as fatter game was within your reach. Oh," he added, through shut teeth, "you have done your work well! You have taken from me all faith in seeming fairness and truth; you have shown me that utter falsity may have so goodly an outside that never again will I hope to discern between in and the virtue it simulates. You have turned all the sweetness of my life into bitterness. Miss Moreton, I wish you joy of your work."

As if afraid of trusting himself to say more, he turned abruptly and left the room.

Edith still stood on the spot where she had halted when she first entered. During the interview she had only spoken once; one short monosyllable had constituted her part of the conversation; now she was ghastly pale, and as the door closed a sort of shiver passed over her; then she tottered, rather than walked, to the sofa, and flung herself upon it, hiding her blanched face in her hands. Over and over she heard those words ringing in her ears: "I wish you joy of your work!" It almost maddened her to think of what her work had been. With contemptible weakness she had allowed herself to be turned from what she knew was right; had discarded the poor lover for the more fortunate rich one. Well, she was effectually rid of her lovers now, both the rich and the poor. She had indeed done her work well!

Three years later Edith Moreton was one of the teachers in a large school in a neighbouring city. She was trying by assiduous work, by well-directed effort and honest purpose, to wipe out the foolish errors of the past. She had diligently striven to do her whole duty in this her chosen work, and not without success. She had made many warm friends, and was far happier in her independence and self-reliant effort than she was in the years of indulgent ease spent under her brother-in-law's roof. She was conscious, too, that these years of trial had made her better, stronger, truer to the instincts of her nature. At first it was bitter indeed to take up her life among total strangers, and fight her battle alone, and the bitterness was enhanced by the remorseful memory of the two men who had loved her and whose lives she had blighted. Not blighted, though, as far as Rufus Campbell was concerned—only shadowed for a time, perhaps, for Edith had again met him; he was married and had apparently forgiven her, probably because he no longer cared.

But of Mr. Atherton she had heard nothing; he had been abroad for years. Sometimes she thought of him with a dull ache at her heart, and wondered why the memory of his pain in that long-past time hurt her worse than the thought of her falsity to Rufus Campbell.

Perhaps it was because the latter was consoled, or perhaps because she never knew how much he really suffered.

It was a sweltering afternoon in August; the streak of sunshine let in by the narrow window was creeping over the dusty floor in the school-room where the teacher was giving the final lesson of the day. It would soon be the welcome four o'clock. As the bell for dismissal rang a little girl approached the teacher and handed her a dainty little note, saying, in a low voice:

"Miss Moreton, mamma says please tell me if you can come."

Having read the note, Miss Moreton replied: "Tell your mamma I shall certainly come."

When the children, marching two and two, had trooped out she again read the note; it was only an invitation to take tea with a friend, but there was a kindly friendship in each word that warmed her heart.

An hour later she was brushing her shining brown hair in one of Mrs. Crawford's cosy rooms and looking at the fair face that smiled back at her from the glass. When she was ready to go down, Mrs. Crawford herself appeared, and as they passed along the hall she said:

"By the way, I forgot to tell you that I had a great surprise this afternoon. A cousin whom I have not seen for years came to see me, and is going to spend the evening with us. I hope you will like him."

They entered the room, and Mrs. Crawford formally presented Miss Moreton to Mr. Atherton.

Yes, there could be no doubt of it—it was Harris Atherton.

Bronzed by the suns of many climes, changed by time and travel, still Edith would have known him anywhere.

They bowed to each other quietly and coldly, exchanged a few polite words of greeting, and then seated themselves as far apart as the room would allow.

Mrs. Crawford had great difficulty in keeping the ball of conversation rolling.

Edith thought it the most uncomfortable evening that ever she had spent in her life, and her discomfort was not lessened when she found that Mrs. Crawford had arranged for Mr. Atherton to accompany her home.

"Oh," she thought, in bitter mortification, "why cannot Mrs. Crawford see that we dread being left alone together?"

So she found herself walking along the street, her hand resting on Mr. Atherton's arm.

Utter silence reigned between them till, as they began to near her home, Edith found courage to speak.

"Mr. Atherton," she said, very tremulously, "I want to ask your forgiveness for—for—" and here her voice failed her.

"For any little pain you may have caused me in the past, you mean?" he said, with a sort of mournful sarcasm in his voice that pierced Edith's heart even while it roused her spirit.

"I ask you to forgive me for whatever I caused you to suffer, and I ask it humbly," she said, with dignity. "I was weak, foolish, childish. You are a man, and strong of purpose. Surely you cannot feel anger yet against so weak a thing as I long ago proved myself to be."

As she spoke she lifted her eyes, large and dewy, to his, and he, gazing into them, replied:

"A few hours ago nothing would have made me believe that I could ever forgive you; but I have been hearing of you all this afternoon, and your presence has the old witching spell over me. Well," after a pause, and drawing a deep breath, "let us be friends once more, since you wish it, though I am well aware that on my part the compact is not a wise one."

They had reached Edith's home by this time, and after some hesitation she diffidently held out a peace-making hand, and he took it in a friendly clasp as he said good night.

It happened, after this, that they met at first occasionally at Mrs. Crawford's house, or at the houses of other of their acquaintances; but, as time passed, wherever Edith went, Mr. Atherton generally made his appearance too. And one day, nearly a year later, Edith again wore on her finger a diamond betrothal ring. After all her blunders she was really going to be mistress of the big house, and it is to be presumed that her sister forgave her accordingly. But what Edith valued was the steadfast love that not even her weak-minded errors sufficed to kill.

F. H.

## FACETIÆ.

### STRANGE.

It is a fact, not so generally known as it ought to be, that, while some parties take a trip out of town to get a rest, others do so to avoid one. —Judy.

Differences of sex are always remarkable. Think of the wide gulf between having a cocktail at a low bar and having an entail barred on a lordly family estate. —Judy.

### SEASONABLE FACT.

People who at this time of year travel about picking pockets of hope need not necessarily be thieves. —Judy.

Skimmed wants to know whether cream of tartar is made from milk sold by ejected mothers-in-law? —Judy.

### VERY GRAW-TY.

How is it that mice are such very clever little brutes?—Well, if you must have it, because they gnaw so much. —Judy.

The old man of the woods is the Aquarium orang-outang, who tries every day to cut his stick. —Judy.

Is it not rather ominous when we read that the Premier found himself so much at home in the "Isle of Mull"? —Judy.

MR. GLADSTONE'S SPECIFIC.—"Bark."

—Judy.

### QUESTION, QUESTION!

CAN haughty culture be said to be "high training"? —Judy.

CAN a railway accident be described as a "signal failure"? —Judy.

CAN your medical man be properly spoken of as a "man of patients," however great a hurry he may be in?

CAN a glass of bitter beer be said to be "a Bass relief"? —Judy.

CAN the really best of all broad sources be said to be—work?

CAN a bad attack of indigestion be easily disposed of by calling it all "stuff"? —Judy.

THE PRIEST'S WIT.—CURIAN once said to Father Leary, "I wish, reverend father, that you were St. Peter and had the keys of Heaven, because then you could let me in." The shrewd and witty priest saw the sarcasm, and turned its sharp edge on the sceptic by replying, "By my honour and conscience, sir, it would be better for you that I had the keys of the other place, for then I could let you out."

### "THE GENTLE CRAFT."

PRECEPTOR (after a lecture): "Now, what are the principal things that are obtained from the earth?"

PUPIL (and "disciple of Izaak Walton"): "Worms, sir." —Punch.

SUGGESTION TO SIR W. V. HARCOURT.—Site for a House of Detention for Juvenile Offenders —Try Birkenhead. —Punch.

PLACE TO FINISH OFF A GOUTY PERSON.—Portland. —Punch.

### "SMALL BY DEGREES."

"MAYN'T I have some more sugar in my tea, Aunt Georgy?"

"Why, you've had three lumps."

"Yes, but they melt away so." —Punch.

WHY is the discovery of the North Pole like an illicit whiskey manufactory?—Because it's a secret still. —Punch.

### SUMMING UP.

CAPTAIN: "What's the charge, sergeant?"

SERGEANT: "This time it's drunkenness, sir. But this man is the most troublesome fellow in the regiment, sir. He goes out when he likes, and comes in when he likes, and gets drunk when he likes—in fact, he might be a horficer!" —Punch.

COUNTSHIP TO BE AVOIDED.—County courtship. —Punch.

At Liverpool a young man was charged with burglary, he having been discovered stuck in a chimney down which he had endeavoured to make his way into the house of a pawnbroker. Fearing, however, that he might be injured mortally the trapped one yelled "I'm stuck!" His cries were heard at this cry a police-man flew to the rescue. But it is no more than might be expected that when a man is jammed his life should be "preserved." —Moonshine.

PROPRIETOR: "I say, boy, have you seen a horse and cart?"

Boy: "No, I ain't."

PROPRIETOR: "But I left 'em here, you know."

Boy: "Well, I ain't got 'em. You can search me if you like." —Moonshine.

LAT MEMBERS.—Hens. —Moonshine.

A BRANCH BUSINESS.—Bough-ing to an acquaintance. —Moonshine.

A YARD ARM.—Three feet. —Moonshine.

The man who had a scheme "in his eye," has since "worked it out." —Moonshine.

The man who went off in a rage returned an hour afterwards in a cab. —Moonshine.

A SOFT BLOW.—Struck by a thought. —Moonshine.

A FELINE NARRATOR.—The cat-o'-nine-tails. —Moonshine.

THE SEAMSTRESS'S REEL FRIEND.—Cotton. —Moonshine.

AN ACCOUNT CURRENT.—What I have to pay for the hire of my dog's house. —Moonshine.

A CUE-RIOUS TABLE.—The board of green cloth. —Moonshine.

NOT TO BE HAD ON, "TICK."—A dog-watch. —Moonshine.

"VERY LIKE A WHALE."—A party who has a "bottle" nose. —Moonshine.

The chief distinction between Whisky and Margate is that the one place is famous for its jet, the other for its jetty. —Moonshine.

CONUNDRUMS.

How many ears has "the iron horse?" One—the engineer.

Why is the vowel "o" the only one sounded? Because all the others are in-audible.

What tree most resembles the remains of a fine Havana cigar? A white ash.

How is it that trees can put on a new dress without opening their trunks? Because they leave out their summer clothing.

MEDICAL.

To JUDY, MADAM.—If you would kindly answer the following questions it will be very useful to me in my studies:

1. Do the aristocracy ever suffer from low fever?

2. Are the old subject to neu-ralgia?

3. Is it of any use, travellers adopting Homoeopathy?

4. How is it that fishermen seldom have the nettle rash?

5. Does tic-douloureux only affect the impecunious?

6. Can a Dover's powder be obtained at Calais?

7. Is madness among the feline race a species of Cat-arrh?

8. Would it be advisable to administer ars-enic to a male afflicted with chronic as-thma?

9. Is it excusable on the part of a schoolboy to describe it as "no lark to have the thrush?"—Yours truly,

MEDICAL STUDENT.

—Judy.

Who was the first poet? and what did he compose?—Frost. A Rime on the Beauties of Creation.

APPROPRIATE.

The rage to see Dr. Tanner is so great that they run "cheap fast trains."

—Funny Folks.

#### CONTRADICTION OF TERMS.

THE ourang-outang at the Aquarium is a "hit." Yet naturalists say it is a miss.

—Funny Folks.

#### RIGHT TO A T.

Why is the letter "t" like a standard work? —Because it is always in type, and never out of print.

—Funny Folks.

#### NO AS-SPURGEON ON HIM.

MR. SPURGEON is recovering from his rheumatism; at least, by rumour—'tis-made out that he is.

—Funny Folks.

THE TUE-"TONIC."—The bitter of Gauls.

—Funny Folks.

#### LOVE'S POTENCY.

ONE beautiful morn,  
After love was born  
In my heart for my pretty Nell;  
We rocked on the tide,  
Sitting side by side  
In the little yacht "Nancy Bell."

We whispered of love,  
Of the stars above,  
We talked of the deeps below,  
And wasing the songs  
That to youth belongs,  
But never the songs of woe.

Nellie nothing loth,  
We pledged our troth,  
With the sea gulls there to hear;  
And a ring of gold,  
I, the lover bold,  
Tried to place on the finger near.

But the circlet fell,  
And the "Nancy Bell"  
Passed over its grave, the while—  
Ah! "there's many a ship  
'Twixt the cup and lip,"  
I said, with a careless smile.

But my darling's eyes,  
So blue and wise,  
Were swimming in heartfelt tears,  
"Tis a sign," she said,  
"That we ne'er shall wed  
Through the coming months and years!"

I hushed her fears,  
Kissed away her tears,  
And called in a priest that day;  
And now we laugh,  
As love's cup we quaff,  
At the "sign" that we charmed away.

M. A. K.

#### STATISTICS.

PROGRESS OF TELEGRAPHY.—A return from New South Wales shows the extent of the electric telegraph lines of that colony during the year 1879: Extent of electric telegraph line wire in actual use on December 31, 12,426 miles; number of electric telegraph stations on December 31, 273; number of telegraph messages transmitted during the year, 1,175,218; total revenue of electric telegraph department for the year, £30,490; total expenditure of electric telegraph department for the year, exclusive of interest on cost of construction of lines, £103,923. In Berlin the system of underground pipes for telegraph wires is now completed. It consists of 33,373m. iron pipes and 460m. passages of masonry, and contains 145 apertures for examination and repair of the lines. The cost amounts to 229,867 marks.

SAVINGS OF MERCHANT SEAMEN.—A return was recently made to Parliament of all deposits received and repaid by the Board of Trade on account of our merchant seamen during the

year ended November 20, 1879, by which it appears that the balance on that date was £107,904 9s.; the amount received from depositors during the year was £50,113 13s. 2d.; the interest received from the National Debt Office for the year was £3,491 11s. 5d.—total receipts, £110,595 13s. 7d.; the repayments during the year amounted to £59,670 9s. 5d.; the balance on November 20, 1879, was £110,839 4s. 2d., total payments, £170,500 13s. 7d. The number and amount of seamen's money orders issued at ports of the United Kingdom and at ports abroad, and paid at ports in the United Kingdom from 1855 to 1879 inclusive was 1,141,998, the amount £6,891,544 3s. 1d.; the number paid was 1,141,013, the amount £6,383,310 4s. 7d.; leaving a balance due by the Board of Trade on account of Treasury orders unpaid on December 31, 1879, of £6,233 18s. 6d., representing 925 orders.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CHOCOLATE CREAM.—Put over the fire one quart of milk; when it comes to a boil add three tablespoonfuls of chocolate. Thicken with corn-starch, and sweeten to taste. Flavour with vanilla. Serve cold with cream.

COFFEE CAKE.—One cup of brown sugar, one cup of butter, one cup of strained coffee, one cup of molasses, three eggs, well beaten, one pound of raisins, two cups of flour, two teaspoonfuls of yeast powder.

APPLE DUMPLINGS.—Make a rich crust, roll out and cut the size of a coffee saucer; put four quarters of apples into each piece, lapping the edges together; bake one hour; when done make a sauce of one cup of sugar, one tablespoonful of corn-starch, one tablespoonful of butter, one tablespoonful of vinegar, a little salt; mix all well together; then pour on one pint of boiling water, stirring briskly; boil twenty minutes; then add one tablespoonful of extract of lemon; place the dumplings on a platter and pour the sauce over them. Serve hot.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

GLASS beetles and butterflies are among the ornaments for ladies' dress this year.

COACHING from London is a very serious business. The owner of the Brighton coach is stated to have spent this year something like £4,000 more than he received; so that for the pleasure of driving a great many hours every day on the London and Brighton coach, and giving people the advantage of a long journey through the lanes and roads of Sussex, he had to pay a larger sum than would form the income of most men, and do all the work into the bargain.

A new musical instrument has been invented by a Russian peasant. It is composed of a framework sustaining a number of wheels, with rims so grooved and notched as to make a humming noise when rapidly revolved. Each wheel sounds a different note, and as the required rate of revolution cannot be immediately attained or discontinued, many remarkable effects may be produced, which, with the peculiar timbre of the instrument, renders the invention a welcome addition to the musical world. It is known in Moscow as the Kalephone, and is shortly to be exhibited in Paris and London.

THE most profitable railway in the world is a little affair not half a mile long, which connects the Manhattan Beach and the Brighton Beach Hotels on Coney Island, N.Y., the summer resort of the well-to-do New Yorkers. It is of three-feet gauge, and has two locomotives and four carriages, a train running each way every five minutes. The railway paid for itself in a few weeks after it was opened, and last year it returned 500 per cent. on its cost. The expenses are 30 dollars a day, and the receipts average 450 dollars, the fare being five cents.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N. A.—Some men of thirty-five are as young in heart and mind as others of twenty-five or thirty. If you resolve to pay your addresses to the young lady, you should at once speak to her parents on the subject.

H. D.—Gray was born December 26, 1716, and died July 30, 1771, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. He was a sensitive and diffident person, easily depressed and inclined to melancholy. It is said that his "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" was not completed until seven years after it was begun. How much he worked on it nobody knows. It was very popular at the time of its publication in 1732, and has held its own ever since.

A. M.—The best authorities give the whole number of popes, including Pius IX., at two hundred and sixty-two. The present pope is therefore the two hundred and sixty-third pontiff.

R. P.—Mount Arrarat, in Asia, has been frequently ascended.

A. T.—The legal control of a father over his son ends when the latter comes of age, which is when he has attained his twenty-first year. After that he has no power to interfere with the actions of his children, they being henceforth responsible to society for their doings.

F. E.—It has not been satisfactorily determined where the first newspaper was printed; because, in about a century after the invention of printing, what were called newsletters were common in England, France, Germany, and the Low Countries.

I. W.—Slight stains of ink on the fingers, such as arise during the continued use of the pen, may be readily removed with a little lemon-juice. It is not generally known that common ink is a very good remedy for slight burns—those, for instance, which might come from hot cigar ash, or the end of a lucifer match held too long.

F. R.—To clean silver or other plate: Mix half a pint of refined neat's foot oil and half a gill of spirits of turpentine. Scrape a little kernel or rotten stone, wet a woollen rag therewith, dip it into the scraped kernel, and rub the metal well. Wipe off with a soft cloth, polish with dry leather and use more of the kernel. In respect to steel, if it is very rusty use a little powder of pumice with the liquid on a separate woollen rag first.

W. T.—A man who, after winning the affections of a person he intends to make his wife, changes his mind without sufficient cause is manifestly unworthy the regard of a sensible woman. It is hard to advise a course which may seem ungracious, but we should certainly hesitate to say write. Supposing the false man consented to renew the engagement, no happiness is likely to come of the proposed union. His conduct up to this point shows either the absence of real love, or a wanton disposition which augurs badly for his kindness, or even his humanity as a husband. Let him go, and persuade the object of your solicitude to take a more rational view of the bereavement.

T. O.—The word Yankee is derived from various origins by different authorities. It is commonly considered to be a corrupt pronunciation of the word English, or of the French word *Anglais*, by the American aborigines. It is also said to be a corruption of *Jankin*, a diminutive of John, a nickname given to the English colonists of Connecticut by the Dutch settlers of New York. It is also said to have been a favourite cant word at Cambridge, Mass., as early as 1713, and that it meant excellent; as, a yankee good horse, yankee good molasses. It is supposed to have been adopted by the students of Harvard College, in Cambridge, as a byword, and thus it got spread all over the country, and finally was applied to New Englanders generally as a term of slight reproach. It is now used in the Middle and Western States to indicate a citizen of New England; in the Southern States to indicate a citizen of the Northern States, and in Europe to indicate a citizen of the United States.

RICHARD.—To make peach brandy, wash eighteen pounds of peaches, with their stones; macerate them for twenty-four hours with five gallons of ninety-five per cent. alcohol, and four gallons of water. Strain, press and filter; add five pints of light syrup. Colour dark yellow with burnt sugar colouring.

R. B.—For catarrh, snuff up the nose occasionally a little table salt, and gargle the throat before retiring at night with a solution of salt and water. We have known obstinate cases of catarrh cured by this simple remedy.

## OUR NEXT NUMBER (912) will contain the OPENING CHAPTERS of SO FAIR HER FACE.

## A NEW STORY

of great power and entrancing interest, by one of the most accomplished authors of the period.

The attention of our Readers and their Friends is also respectfully directed to A NEW FEATURE which we propose to introduce at the same time, entitled OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS, which we hope will meet with favour and tend to enhance the popularity of THE LONDON READER, the largest and best periodical of its kind.

Published Friday, October 15th, 1880.

SARAH, MATILDA and ALMA, three friends, would like to correspond with three young men with a view to matrimony. Sarah is eighteen, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Matilda is nineteen, fair, medium height, fond of home. Alma is nineteen, dark, medium height, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be tall, dark, fond of home.

## "MY JACK IS AT THE HELM."

Oh, I am as happy and merry a wife  
As ever a wife could be;  
And there's never a home in all the land  
Like our good ship on the sea.  
And when the billows like mountains rise,  
And the wild waves dash and whelm,  
I hug my babe to my heart and sing:  
"My Jack is at the helm."

We have no roof, but the arching dome  
Of the deep blue sky is ours;  
We have no garden or blossoming lawn,  
But we have no need of flowers;  
O'er the rippling track of our ship the sea  
Each morning its glory throws,  
And the tints that flush from myriad drops  
Would shame the brightest rose.

We know that a great world somewhere wakes  
To the clamour and clang of bells;  
We know that the struggling, striving poor,  
A city's dense legion swells;  
But we have our brow to the cooling breeze,  
And give thanks that our lot is cast  
Where our joy is in the flowing sails,  
And our trust in the sturdy mast.

And whenever the low, grey headlands rise,  
That tell us a port is in sight,  
How the sailors will strive till our cosy ship,  
From fore to aft is bright!  
When the lines are cast, and the anchor dropped,  
And the sailors give "three times three,"  
For the voyage safe o'er, my sailor, Jack,  
Adds another for baby and me.

So naught, to me, is a home on land,  
For I am a sailor's bride;  
And Jack is glad that baby and I  
Are content with him to abide;  
And whenever we list the tempest's rage,  
And the wild waves strive to o'erwhelm,  
My baby laughs, and I gaily sing,  
"Our Jack is at the helm!"

L. S. U.

L. F. P., seventeen, would like to correspond with a good-tempered young gentleman.

TRIN DISH and DIET BARGE, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Trin Dish is twenty, dark, good-looking. Diet Barge is nineteen, fair.

ALFRED, ALBERT, JACK, and WALTER, four friends, would like to correspond with four young ladies. Alfred is twenty-two, medium height, fair, light brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home and children. Albert is twenty-two, medium height, dark, blue eyes, dark hair, of a loving disposition. Jack is twenty-one, medium height, light brown hair, grey eyes. Walter is twenty-three, tall, dark, dark brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home.

THREE YARDS OF SERGE, FOUR YARDS FLANNEL, FIVE YARDS TWILL, and SIX YARDS DUCK, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies. Three Yards of Serge is twenty-two, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Four Yards Flannel is twenty, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Five Yards Twill is twenty-six, tall, brown hair, blue eyes. Six Yards Duck is twenty-four, medium height. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two, fond of home and children.

LEST MO, ALLY SLOPER, DOG TOBY, STRAIGHT TIP, WEST HO, and RALPH RACKSTRAW, six seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with six young ladies. Lest Mo is medium height, fair, blue eyes, fond of children. Ally Sloper is twenty-two, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing. Dog Toby is twenty-three, medium height, dark, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Straight Tip is twenty-three, tall, dark, grey eyes, of a loving disposition. West Ho is twenty-three, tall, dark hair, hazel eyes, considered good-looking. Ralph Rackstraw is twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes, light hair.

WILLIE, a poor clerk, twenty, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady.

WILLIE and WILL, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Willie is nineteen, tall, fair, of a loving disposition. Will is twenty-one, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Respondents must be about eighteen.

ANNIE, ZINGORA and ROSE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young mechanics. Annie is nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, good-looking. Zingora is twenty, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, domesticated, fond of home. Rose is twenty-one, tall, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-two, dark curly hair.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

K. G. is responded to by—Sampson A.

P. S. G. by—Melite, twenty-four.

G. N. D. by—Marina, twenty-six.

ONE BELL by—Violet, nineteen, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

SWEEP OUT by—Rose, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and children.

FETCH THE GROS by—Lily, twenty, brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home and children.

GEORGE H. by—Nellie, twenty, light hair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of home.

A. B. by—King, twenty-four, fair, good-looking.

H. S. by—Emperor, twenty-three, medium height, dark, fond of home.

A. H. G. by—Sophie, twenty, tall, dark, considered good-looking.

GEORGE by—Marie, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of home.

A. H. G. by—Laughing Rose, seventeen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes.

GEORGE H. by—Edith, twenty-one, medium height, loving.

GEORGE by—Maud, twenty-one, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes.

KATE G. by—B. D., twenty-two, tall, fair, fond of home and music.

SWEEP OUT by—H. S., medium height, dark, fond of home.

ARTHUR by—Loving Isabel.

SIXTY-FOUR POUNDER by—Miss W.

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